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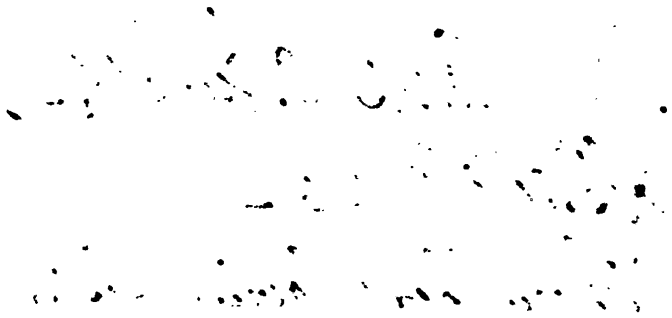
Sarah Orne Jewett
AT SOUTH BERWICK, MAINE

BEQUEATHED BY
Theodore Jewett Eastman
A.B. 1901 - M.D. 1905
1931

Sarah O. Jewett
April 5th 1866.
From her loving sister



WINIFRED BERTRAM

AND

THE WORLD SHE LIVED IN.

By the Author of

"THE SCHONBERG-COTTA FAMILY,"
"DIARY OF KITTY TREVYLYAN," &c.

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WINIFRED BERTRAM.

CHAPTER I.

IN one of the pleasantest outskirts of London stood, or stands, a pleasant rambling old house, built of red brick, toned by the rains and suns of a hundred and fifty years to a quaint variety of tints. There were bow-windows in it, and balconies, and verandahs, and projections, and recesses, which threw all kinds of irregular shadows, and made you feel attracted at once to the old house which some of its owners had evidently taken such pleasure in:—which, in its small way, had grown up, like an old Gothic church, out of the tastes and needs of people who delighted in it. Its eccentricities, moreover, were veiled by climbing roses and jasmine and magnolias, interweaving the balconies with intricate tracery, fes-

tooning the verandahs, clustering round the windows.

In the drawing-room of this house one warm day in August three people were collected—Mrs. O'Brien, its mistress; her nephew Maurice Bertram, a young clergyman; and his little sister, Winifred. A soft spell of repose, a kind of dreamy charm hung about that room. No color, no form, no perfume predominated in it. Nothing was old, so as to give the slightest indication of coming to an end; nothing was new, so as to give the slightest clue to its having had a beginning.

That carpet on which the foot sank noiselessly as on the softest mossy turf, those soft draperies and languishing chairs and sofas, those bronze statuettes and quaint vases, what imagination could ever dive so far as to trace them back to factories and warehouses, to the hammering and screwing and planing and stitching of working men and women? No! they must have floated into their places like the furniture of Aladdin's palace, like the stones at the voice of Orpheus, at the call of a genie, to the sound of fairy music.

Did not the breath of enchantment linger around them still? What else was that elegant aromatic perfume which stole over your senses? Why else did every sound enter there softened and harmonized, so that the voices from the houses in the valley below—voices of eager women, and crying babies, and shouting school-boys—sounded there soft and dreamy as the hum of the bees about the flowers outside;—just as the sorrows and crimes of

the world came to Mrs. O'Brien's heart, artistically made musical and harmonious through the pages of the novel she was reading.

There were three drawing-rooms, one within another, like the recesses in an Indian cabinet, each smaller and choicer than the last.

In the outer of these, Maurice Bertram sat writing by an open window, looking over the sloping lawns and shrubberies of the house, and a rich landscape of meadow and woodland, to a distance of blue hills.

A pleasant fresh breeze now and then breathed in at this window. It was the only place in the room which led your thoughts from the little enchanted world within to the world outside, and by the rapidity with which Maurice was writing, and the clear steady light in his eyes when, from time to time, he looked up, it was plain that the drowsy spell of the place had not fallen upon him.

In the next room his little sister Winifred lay curled up in the depths of an easy-chair, divided between a story-book and a sleepy kitten.

In the innermost room Mrs. O'Brien was resting on a sofa, languidly turning over the pages of a new novel.

Winifred's interest in her book seemed to have been becoming more and more feeble, until at length she let it fall from her hand on the cushions among which she herself sank back, in an attitude of the profoundest weariness. She was soon, however, as weary of repose as she had been of reading, and her half-closed eyes wandered dreamily from Maurice to

her aunt, as if looking for some one or something it would be worth while to disturb, so as to extract a little excitement.

At last she deposited pussy on the cushions, and slipping from the chair wandered across the room to Mrs. O'Brien, and, throwing herself on a rug by the sofa, drew her aunt's arm around her.

After remaining quiet thus a few moments, she suddenly looked up and said:

"Auntie, what did uncle mean by calling Mr. Vernon *blasé* yesterday? I looked in the French dictionary, and it said, 'burnt up, consumed,' but that must be a mistake. What did uncle mean?"

"Little girls should not always want to know what grown-up people mean," said Mrs. O'Brien, rather bewildered by this sudden call on her faculties, and anxious to prevent further precocious researches into French dictionaries. "I suppose your uncle meant that Mr. Vernon seemed rather tired and discontented—looked, indeed, as if he had come to the end of everything, and cared for nothing."

"I knew the dictionary was absurd," said Winnie, who looked on the dictionary in the light of a natural enemy, without which she should have learned French with as little difficulty as English. "Well, auntie, if that is what *blasé* means, that is exactly what I am. I am tired of everything. I have come to the end of everything. I was at five parties last week, and every one was duller than the last. I knew beforehand just what would be said and done. And now, this new story-book. It is

exactly like the last, only a little altered and done up fresh, as Rosalie alters my wreaths and dresses. I can't think, auntie, how people go on saying and doing the same things all their lives long. It is always round and round, the same over and over again, and nothing in it. I think the world is dreadfully small and old, aunt. If that is what *blasé* means, that must be just what Mr. Vernon and I are. We've got to the end of everything, and don't care for anything—only, of course, auntie, it's much worse for me than for him, because I'm so much nearer the beginning."

Mrs. O'Brien laughed as she patted Winnie's round fair cheek, and mentally compared it with Mr. Vernon's sallow hollow face, and thought how amused Mr. O'Brien would be with the child's precocity.

But Maurice who had an inconvenient habit of taking in whatever was going on, however busy he seemed to be with something else, at this point interposed, and said quietly, "Winnie, I think your French dictionary was right." Winnie, thus challenged to controversy, marched briskly to Maurice, and planted herself on a footstool at his feet.

"If," Maurice continued, "you had been given a long twist of wax taper to light up your Christmas tree for a whole evening, and you chose to *burn* it *up* in a few minutes, whose fault would it be that you had come to the end of everything, and what right would you have to complain?"

"It would be principally Rosalie's fault for giv-

ing it to me," said Winnie, perceiving the aim of her brother's shafts much too plainly not to avoid them. But I should not think of complaining. I should have enjoyed myself in my own way. And I should lie down for the rest of the time, and go to sleep. And that is just what I should like to do altogether now; and I dare say so would Mr. Vernon," she concluded, "only we can't, and that's the unpleasant part of it. We've come to the end of all the things, and we have to go on as if we hadn't."

"Ah," rejoined Maurice, "I see you never heard of the Contracting Chamber. It is rather strange, considering how extensive your reading has been."

At first Winnie did not seem to heed, she played with a rose, pulling it very elaborately to pieces, as if she did not care for anything else. But as Maurice was rising to go into the garden, her curiosity got the better of her, and she vouchsafed to say:

"What is the Contracting Chamber, Maurice? I dare say it is only one of your Ragged School stories, and I always know what you're at in them after the first few sentences."

"So do the ragged boys sometimes, I am afraid," said Maurice laughing. "You see I am not so clever as you and the ragged children. But that is only natural since you have come so close to the end of things, and they have come a little nearer than you, I am afraid, while I have not come to the end of one world yet, or of anything in it, to say nothing of the five other worlds."

"Five other worlds!" said Winnie, "what are

they? I hope they are not all the same as this. But, Maurice, this once I will be your ragged class."

"At a time not very long ago," began Maurice, "and in a country not very far off, there was a palace built on very peculiar principles. Indeed, some people said it was not built at all, but grew. The queen of this palace was very amiable and benevolent, and did what she could to make every one around her happy. She expected that all her courtiers should do the same. All her court-ladies, therefore, while they were provided with the most beautiful suites of apartments in the palace (the furniture and situation of each being exactly suited to the tastes of the occupants), were expected to make these apartments in some way workrooms for the good of their country. That country had been sadly misgoverned by the preceding dynasty, and there was a great deal in it to be set right.

"All the apartments of the court-ladies, therefore, were also offices for some work of charity. The title of each was written on the door under the name of the occupant, so that there could be no mistake about it for applicants or inmates. One, for instance, was the office for the blind, another for the deaf and dumb, another for sick children—"

"And another for Ragged Schools, no doubt," interrupted Winnie.

"No doubt," said Maurice. "The singular thing, however, about these apartments was that if the possessor did not attend to the benevolent work assigned to her, but used them only for herself and her own pleasure, the whole suite gradually con-

tracted until they became so narrow as slowly to stifle the inmate, and finally to crush her into dust; when from beautiful homes they became narrow, crumbling mausoleums."

"If many of the ladies made a bad use of their apartments, the palace must have had a very forlorn look," observed Winnie.

"Not in the least," Maurice replied. "The instant the unfaithful occupant had been crushed and buried, the mausoleum also crumbled into dust, and a new dwelling rose on the site."

"Very uncomfortable," said Winnie, "for the new ladies to be living on the graves of the old ones."

"Not at all," said Maurice. "They knew nothing about it. Every one everywhere is always living over graves of somebody or something, and very few think of it."

"I think nothing of the amiability and benevolence of that queen," resumed Winnie, with considerable vehemence. "I think she was a hard-hearted wretch."

"Not at all," said Maurice. "The queen had nothing to do with it. The apartments, as I told you, were self-acting. It was their nature to do as they did. No one could help it. They contracted in this way by the same kind of law which makes the earth go round, and the tides ebb and flow."

"But," rejoined Winne, "those court-ladies must have been exceedingly foolish. When they saw the apartments contracting, if they did not like to do their work, why did they not escape in time?"

"They never did see the apartments contracting,"

said Maurice. "They saw their neighbors' apartments contracting sometimes from the outside, but never their own; and for this reason: The rooms were full of mirrors and paintings on glass, arranged in such a way as to cause a strange optical delusion. As window after window was slowly and silently crushed out it was replaced by a mirror, which made the wretched occupant think that, whatever was happening outside, all was right within. The world was growing narrower and narrower, she thought, but inside all was spacious and beautiful as ever. And so she went on admiring herself more and more in the mirrors, as window after window into the outer world vanished, until at last the stifling air of the poor narrow chamber overpowered her, and she fainted away and was crushed, and never heard of more."

Winnie's eyes had been cast down, and her face had been growing very grave and earnest during the last part of Maurice's story. When he paused, for a minute she said nothing, but looked wistfully out through the window, until, glancing up, and seeing Maurice's eyes fixed on her, she colored, and said, laughing:

"That is a very dismal story, Maurice, and I would rather hear nothing more about it. Auntie says it is not of the least use to make one's self miserable about miserable things that never happened after all."

"But suppose they did happen, and are happening," said Maurice, "and we could do something to stop their happening any more."

"There! now I have caught you," she retorted. "You have tried to cheat me with a story which is, after all, only an allegory. And I hate allegories. I can't think why people cannot be honest, and speak out what they want to say at once."

Nevertheless Winnie could not get Maurice's story out of her head.

It haunted her. She could not help wondering if she had got into the Contracting Chamber. But she would on no account betray this to Maurice. She went with him that afternoon to the little gate which led out of the rock garden, and took leave of him in a light and easy manner, as if his words had not made the slightest impression on her. Then she returned to her favorite nook, the grotto in the rock-garden, with the little spring bubbling up in the middle of it and then oozing through a little wilderness of ferns and mosses and cool large-leaved plants to the stone basin in the centre of the garden, with the stone-seat beside it. On that seat Winnie placed herself, watching the little stream as it trickled into the basin, and made little eddies and bubbles, which rocked the water-lilies as they floated, while the forget-me-nots swayed hither and thither in the current of air, and wondering about the Contracting Chamber, and whether any one had ever got out of it. She was planning how to obtain further information on the subject from Maurice, without betraying too personal an interest in it, when she was startled by a little feeble, childish voice quite near her.

Listening attentively, she heard the words:

"Please give me a flower, lady. Please give me a flower!" repeated in a monotonous, plaintive strain, as if it were a kind of chant.

Climbing up on the seat and leaning over, Winnie saw at the garden-gate a little face peeping in.

Her first impulse was to run for safety to the house. She had always been very seriously warned about the wickedness of beggars, and their mysterious connection with wicked old women who delighted to steal rich people's children, especially naughty children, and make them miserable (partly from the pleasure of it and partly as instruments of divine vengeance); stories that, as Winnie's conscience was never absolutely clear, left in her mind a confused dread of beggars and of Providence.

There was something, however, in that little, feeble childish voice which attracted her irresistibly. So, after looking towards the house to see that there were no signs of Mademoiselle Rosalie, and over the gate out beyond the garden to assure herself that no dangerous old woman was lurking near, Winnie went to the gate and spoke to the child through the bars.

"What do you want little girl?" she said.

"Please give me a flower, lady," repeated the little plaintive voice. "Please do give me a flower."

"Winnie's interest was aroused, and gathering several scarlet geraniums and blue lobelias, she gave them through the bars into the little eager outstretched hand.

How thin the little hand was, how wan and wizened the little face

The flowers were eagerly clutched, but Winnie's sense of politeness was sorely outraged by not a word of thanks being returned.

Still further was she repelled when, after smelling the flowers, the stranger held them back with a disappointed air, and the petition began again, this time more boldly than before:

"Please, lady, give me a flower. Them has no smell. And it's for Dan—poor brother Dan."

Winnie felt perplexed. The little girl had evidently not at all good manners. But then neither had she any bonnet nor shoes, which might be an extenuating circumstance. When one has no shoes, Winnie thought, one's manners perhaps necessarily deteriorate; although, in the stories about charitable children, she was quite sure there was not one instance of a gift being received in such a free and easy way. The little children in the moral tales, especially the French ones, always went into such raptures at the beneficence of the charitable young ladies, and with streaming eyes invoked every blessing on their fair young heads.

However, she felt very sorry for the ragged little girl, and she also felt anxious to know who "Dan" was.

Accordingly, yielding to her kindly impulses, she said, although with much dignity, that the little beggar child might feel the great gulf between good manners and none at all:

"You may come into the garden, little girl, and choose for yourself; only you ought always to say, thank you."

The little girl stared in equal bewilderment at the permission and the exhortation.

But when the gate was opened she did not hesitate a moment what to choose. Paradise that the garden was to her, she was nevertheless in no way perplexed among its treasures. She walked straight to a moss-rose bush, and gathered from it one rose and one rose-bud.

"That is what Dan wanted," she said. "Dan will be so pleased, lady. It will make him smile, this will, and he hasn't smiled these days."

And though she did not say thank you, Winnie concluded that was her way of expressing the same, and modified her opinion as to her guest's manners.

"What is your name?" she asked. "And who is Dan?"

"Dan's my brother," was the reply, "and they call me Fan, at least aunt does when she ain't cross, and uncle does when he ain't been drinking, and knows one of us from the t'other. And Dan does always. Leastways he calls me little Fan, and so used mother."

"Doesn't your mother call you Fan now?" asked Winnie; "what does she call you then?"

"She don't never call me," said Fan; "she don't never call neither Dan nor me now; and Dan says she never won't."

"Where is she gone then?" asked Winnie, growing confidential. "My mamma, too, is a long way off—in India."

"Mother ain't a long way off," said the child.

"They only took her down into the country. 'Twasn't far, they said. But she hasn't never come back. Aunt said one day when she was cross and beat me, and I was crying for mother, that they'd been and put her in a box under ground. But aunt don't mean half she says when she's cross. Dan says she's in heaven, and he says heaven ain't far off, for folks goes there all in a minute. He learned the hymn about it at the school. Dan did."

"Does Dan say hymns?" Winnie asked.

"He sings one hymn," said the little girl.

"What hymn is that?" said Winnie.

"About the children in heaven, and glory," replied the child. "But I can't say it. I'm two years younger than Dan, come Christmas. And I never went to school. I've got to mind aunt's baby."

"Where did Dan learn his hymn?" Winnie asked.

"At the school at the end of our court," Fan replied.

"Why did he not learn any more, Fan?"

"He did learn more," said Fan; "he learned Our Father chartneaven."

"What is that?" said Winnie, bewildered.

"It's what Dan says mornings and evenings. I don't rightly know what it means; but it is good words, Dan says, and it seems to make him happy."

"Why does not Dan keep on going to the school, if he likes it so much?" Winnie resumed.

"He couldn't go no more, since he broke his leg," said Fan.

"Did Dan break his leg?" Winnie exclaimed; "how dreadful! How did he do that?"

"Going up the chimney with the sweeps' brush for uncle," said the child.

"Was that long since?"

"I don't know," Fan replied; "it seems very long. And he don't get no better. The doctor said he could walk, but he hasn't no strength. There isn't always much to eat, and Dan can't always eat what there is. Dan don't hardly ever smile now," she continued; "only after he says Our Father or the hymn, and when the lady opposite, who keeps the grocer's shop, brought him a flower from the country. So I came out to look for a flower like that all pink and curled up, and wrapped up in bits of green, and smelling sweet. And now," she concluded, "I must go home to Dan. He'll be watching for me from his bed at the garret window, and wondering what's come to me."

By this time Winnie's heart was quite won to the poor little girl with the sharp, thin face, and she said:

"Take some more roses, little Fan. See, I will gather them for you."

But Fan shook her head.

"Don't pick 'em, lady," she said, "they look so happy like among the bits of green. It'll be nice to think of 'em and tell Dan about 'em, and one will make Dan smile as well as hundreds. Be-

sides," she added, carefully concealing her treasures in her little ragged apron, and lowering her voice, "there's the boys in our court. If they see them, they'll snatch 'em from me, and I can't hide any more."

"Where is your court?" asked Winnie, full of projects. "Is it a long way off?"

"It seemed pretty far," said the child, "for my feet got sore; and it was so long before I got away from the houses. But I shall soon be back."

And as the little creature limped away, Winnie saw that her little bare feet were blistered, and she exclaimed:

"Oh wait, little Fan! Wait! and I will run and tell auntie. Or, if you must go, tell me exactly where you live, that I may come and see you. Where do you live?"

"In our court," said the child.

"What is it called?" asked Winnie.

"I don't know," said the little girl. "It's our court where we always lived. The Ragged School is at one end, and the other opens into the street with the apple-stalls close to the church with the large doors and the tall tower, where the people who have good clothes go on Sundays."

Winnie was on the point of pressing for a more minute direction, when a shrill voice echoed through the garden, and thrilled through her with a vague sense that she was doing something she ought not to do.

"Mademoiselle Vini! Mademoiselle Vini!" screamed Mademoiselle Rosalie, in the purest Paris-

ian accent; "what voyages your eccentric habits cause me, what solicitudes, what fatigue!" Then pausing, in horror, with uplifted hands, as she beheld into what company Winnie had sunk, she appealed to Heaven to witness the impossibility of any human care ensuring the safety of that terrible child. Then with slow, distinct utterance, hissing out the words between her teeth, she chased "that monster" little Fan from the garden. Whilst Fan fled in speechless terror in one direction, Mademoiselle Rosalie drew Winnie after her in the other, in anything but speechless indignation, by the threat of telling all to madame.

"Madame!" she exclaimed, when she entered Mrs. O'Brien's presence, "it is scarcely half an hour since I miss mademoiselle. Distracted, I seek her in every corner of your domain. At length I catch a glimpse of her dress. I quicken my steps. I arrive. Picture to yourself my feelings, madame, I find her face to face with a child of the lowest people, of the mob; absolutely in the closest approximation to a creature without boots, without hat, with hair like a lioness', absolutely without toilette; a being from whom one might catch the smallpox, the plague, anything—to say nothing of the morals of those people. Mademoiselle takes the hand of this little wretch. She is on the point of embracing her. For a moment I am crushed, annihilated. Then, recovering myself, I cry, 'Go, little monster, little perfidious one, thus intruding thyself into the bosom of families of distinction!' 'Come then,' I say to mademoiselle, 'my angel,

come to my arms! Together let us thank a merciful Heaven, who rescues thee from such contamination.' Mademoiselle, however," she concluded, pathetically waving her hands, "misunderstands my intentions. She fails to appreciate my sentiments. She rejects my caresses. She weeps, she is enraged. She behaves in all respects like a young person beside herself. Such rebuffs, madame, must a sensitive heart too often experience."

And in truth Winnie, on this occasion, to all appearance, justified mademoiselle's accusations far more than her caresses. She called her an "ill-natured, spiteful thing," with other strong Saxon epithets, not at all worthy of a young lady who was learning the purest Parisian, and was altogether so excited and distressed that she could by no means make Mrs. O'Brien understand as she desired either the enormities of Rosalie or the excellences of Fan.

"My dear child," said Mrs. O'Brien at length, when Rosalie had abandoned the field, and Winnie was endeavoring to sob out her explanations, "you really must not agitate youself in this way. You are too excitable, too sensitive. Control your feelings, I entreat you."

And Mrs. O'Brien enforced her consolations by bathing Winnie's forehead with Eau de Cologne; so that Winnie had to submit to being treated as if her sobs were hysterical, instead of sympathetic, until she had quieted herself sufficiently to say:

"O auntie! poor little Fan! poor little Fan! She is not a monster; Rosalie *is!* She is a poor little

girl without shoes. And I was not going to kiss her. She hadn't washed her face. She only wanted one rose to take to Dan. Dan is her poor little brother, who broke his leg. And they live in the court opposite the church with the high tower, with the Ragged School at one end of it. And I do so want to go and see them. I am sure Maurice could find it. Oh please do let me go."

"My dear child," expostulated Mrs. O'Brien, "you really should not invite any little beggar girl into the garden. It is hardly safe. You can give her sixpence through the bars when she comes again. She is sure to come again."

"Oh no," sobbed Winnie; "she is sure never to come again!—never! Rosalie was so cross; she was like a fury. And Fan only wanted that one rose. She did not ask for anything else. And her mother is dead. Oh, don't listen to Rosalie. Please do let me go and see little Fan."

"My darling," said Mrs. O'Brien, "you have too much feeling. There are so many little girls in the world whose mothers are dead. It is very sad. But there always were. And your uncle and I subscribe to three Orphan Asylums. Besides, no one ever could find out your little orphan with such a direction as that. There are thousands of courts in London, and hundreds of churches and ragged schools. Besides, if there is a church and a school so close, there is somebody to take care of the little girl and her sick brother."

Winnie was quite confident that Maurice could find out: and at length the matter was compromised

by referring it to Maurice, although Mrs. O'Brien said, she could not think of allowing Winnie to go herself. She could never answer for the consequences to her mother in India.

And that night, during the little while that Winnie lay awake before she fell asleep, her heart was much too full of little Fan and her griefs to wonder any more whether she had got into the Contracting Chamber.

Just as she was falling asleep, however, what Maurice had said about the Five Worlds came into her mind, and she resolved to ask what he meant.

One new world had opened before her and beneath her that day, which she certainly could not yet see to the end of.

The next morning Winnie awoke very wide awake. She had been dreaming about being stifled in the Contracting Chamber; and when she opened her eyes it was very pleasant to see that the sun was shining in at the two undiminished windows of her room, and the jasmine sprays tapping at the glass, as if to tell her to get up. She arose and opened the window, and looked out on the lawn, still sparkling with dew, and drank in the early fragrance of the flowers, and looked beyond and beyond, over the shrubberies, and over the fields, and over the woods, and over the blue hills, to the bright sky, and thought how wide the world was.

And then, as the breeze brushed a cluster of climbing roses against her cheek, and filled the room with

sweet smells, she thought of little Fan, and the one rose which had given her such delight, and had seemed such a treasure to her.

And she thought how rich the world was, if one of its millions of flowers could fill any one's heart with such pleasure.

But then it came into her heart how tired she had been of everything, and what it was that made the difference between her and little Fan.

"It was Dan!" she said to herself; "it was the thought of Dan, and his smiling over it, that made the rose such a treasure to little Fan. It wasn't for herself she wanted the flower, but for Dan. It was Dan that made the rose such a prize—Dan and the pains she had taken to get it for him—Dan's sweet smile and her poor little blistered feet," concluded Winnie.

And with this thought came back the recollection of Maurice's story, and how the beautiful palace-chambers grew narrower and narrower when the ladies only used them for themselves. She began to have a clearer understanding of the meaning. But at the same time it became less and less clear to her how any one was to get out of the Contracting Chamber; or, at least, how she could, if she was really in it. How could she use what she had for others, and not for herself? She had no Dan watching for her at a garret window, and ready to be pleased with just one rose. Every one around her had everything they wanted, and she could not see what there was for a little girl like her to do to help any one. She resolved to ask Maurice.

And in the meantime she knelt down to say her prayers.

But as she began with "Our Father which art in heaven," it flashed on her that this was what Dan had learned to say mornings and evenings, which little Fan had told her it made him so happy to say.

Her busy thoughts wandered away to the garret in the court, and she seemed to hear the feeble voice of the sick child, in his little bed, saying the words with her. And for the first time she felt how very sweet these words were.

"Our Father," she thought. "That means Dan's Father and little Fan's, and mine. Our Father in heaven. Dan has a Father in heaven, and he knows it. Perhaps that is why he feels heaven is not very far off. Besides, he learned to sing about the children in heaven. I suppose with his Father and the children in heaven, Dan feels heaven more like home than the poor room in the court, where his aunt is cross sometimes, and his uncle drinks too much; and, I suppose, that makes up to Dan a good deal for his home here being so poor."

Some of the following petitions in the prayer were not much clearer to Winnie as she went on than to little Fan. Yet, somehow, she said them differently that morning from before. The "Our Father" seemed to flow through them all like music; the "Our Father," and the sound of poor "brother Dan's" feeble voice.

But when she came to "Give us this day our daily bread," she thought:

"I suppose Dan really means, 'Give me my breakfast and my dinner to-day,' when he says that; and if he gets it he thinks his Father gives it him. But then," continued Winnie, falling into perplexities, "I wonder what he thinks when he doesn't get any. For little Fan says he doesn't always. I wonder if Dan ever feels puzzled, and thinks his Father in heaven has forgotten him. I don't think he can, or he wouldn't go on saying it. Perhaps he thinks it will all be made up to him in heaven, that the things are being kept for him in some way there. But I do wish very much auntie would let me go and find out little Fan, and take Dan some nice things, if it were only that he mayn't get puzzled and not feel happy when he says 'Our Father.' But one thing," concluded Winnie, "I can certainly do. As it does seem so very plain about my daily bread, I will think of Dan and little Fan whenever I say 'Give us this day,' and, perhaps, God will attend more to us altogether. Perhaps even one day He might make auntie let me go myself."

All these thoughts passed through Winnie's mind in much less time than you can read them. But she never dreamt of telling any one about them. It never occurred to her that any one else had ever had anything like the same difficulties.

Only she rose from her knees that morning with a feeling she had never had so strongly before—that God had been listening, and that He understood. And that is very much for any one to learn. We most of us have to learn it over and over again a great many times.

It was well that Winnie's heart had been warmed in this way, for when she came down stairs a great chill awaited her.

Mrs. O'Brien was staying in her own room to breakfast. Her Uncle O'Brien was a very kind man; but it so happened that he knew very little of the poor except from police reports and statistical returns. When, therefore, she told him her adventure with little Fan, he listened to her very patiently until she came to poor Dan's breaking his leg in going up the chimney.

Then he laughed, not at all unkindly, but in a way that greatly disconcerted Winnie, and said:

"My poor little philanthropist, I am very sorry for the bad success of your first charitable enterprise; but it is altogether an imposture. The little girl got up her story very badly. I should think she must have inherited it from her grandmother. No little boys do go up chimneys in these days. It is against the law, and people use sweeping machines instead. You need trouble yourself no more about little Fan. I have no doubt when she got home she had as good a supper as you, and a laugh at the soft-hearted little lady to season it. And I have no doubt, if Rosalie had not come in time, she would have contrived to take home with her some property of yours much more valuable than a rose or a rosebud."

And Mr. O'Brien patted Winnie's cheek, and took up his newspaper again, totally unconscious that he had driven his chariot-wheels of laws and facts quite through the middle of Winnie's heart.

Unfortunately, the recent discoveries about the continued employment of poor little sweep-boys had not then been disclosed, so that Winnie had nothing to bring against her uncle's facts but her own convictions. Not that she was in the least shaken herself. She was only hopeless about convincing him.

So she remained quite silent, until a little suppressed sob aroused Mr. O'Brien's attention, and, looking up he saw that Winnie was vainly endeavoring to swallow her tears.

"Why, my little maiden," he said very gently, "you must not take things so to heart. There always were naughty little beggar girls in the world, and it is only because this is the first time you have seen one that it troubles you. You must forget it, and go and play like a good little girl, and think no more about it."

Winnie could only moan out:

"Oh, uncle, you never saw little Fan!" but she resolved never to mention little Fan's name again until she saw Maurice. Then she turned from the table and crept out of the room, and, seating herself on the window-steps outside, took the kitten on her knee, and discoursed to her at large about her troubles, as being the most sympathizing person at present within reach.

As she sat there, out of sight, Mrs. O'Brien came down, and while her husband was finishing his breakfast, she told him, by way of amusing him, Winnie's precocious idea of her being "blasé, like Mr. Vernon."

At first Mr. O'Brien laughed, but then he became very grave, and said:

"My dear, I am afraid we are not managing that child well. She is altogether too excitable and self-conscious. She has not enough of buoyancy and life about her. This morning she was actually quite sobbing because I told her that little vagabond was an impostor. And I don't like children meditating about themselves, and thinking what they feel. A healthy child ought to be as unconscious of its feelings as a kitten. It is a terrible thing for a child to lose so early the simple unconscious enjoyment of life, and to begin analyzing her sensations and sentiments like a little German philosopher. The truth is, Winnie has been too much with us. She wants children for her companions, and I think we had better send her to school."

At this point, much as her curiosity was excited, Winnie's sense of honor was aroused as to the impropriety of her listening any further to a discussion about herself, and she crept back into the room.

It so happened that morning, that when Winnie went to Rosalie for her French lesson, she found her bathed in tears with a letter in her hand.

"See, Mademoiselle Vini!" she exclaimed, "here are troubles indeed to make any heart bleed. While you have been shedding vain tears over that little vagrant, here are my people suffering, starving, dying—the houses of my relations swept away by

the flood—my grandfather driven from his house, driven from prosperity and ease to stretch out his venerable hands for a morsel of bread—my sister in the dead of night without a moment to make her toilette, compelled to fly with her young infant, and then scarcely escaping destruction. And you, mademoiselle, are enraged on account of that little deceiver against me; me who love you, me who am suffering such extremities!"

But for the exhortation at the close, Winnie would have been greatly touched by Rosalie's narration. But she could not see why, if it was right for Rosalie to weep over the sufferings of little French children, it was wrong for her to feel for little Fan, and accordingly she began to say her lessons rather sullenly.

Mademoiselle, however, was not prepared to let the matter rest there.

"Little ungrateful one!" she murmured through her tears, "this little beggar stranger and her pretended woes are more to thee than all the sorrows of thy poor Rosalie. But it is ever thus! The false sentiment expels the true!"

The accusation of falseness was more than Winnie could stand.

"I am not false, Rosalie," she said, "it is you who are false to say so."

"Proceed with your studies, mademoiselle," retorted Rosalie, "madame shall hear your accusations."

But as the lesson proceeded, Winnie's own conscience pricked her for her want of sympathy, and

after a little while, when she perceived that Rosalie's voice was really faltering, and, looking up, saw that her tears were really continuing to flow silently, she said:

"Rosalie, I am sorry for your old grandfather, and the little children who had to escape in the night with nothing on. I am, indeed."

Happily there was something in Winnie's tone which touched Rosalie's heart, and brought her down from her high judicial seat; she was really fond of Winnie, in her own way, and she was too really in trouble to reject any true sympathy, and thus she poured out into Winnie's ears the story of an inundation in the south of France, which had reduced many people from prosperity to poverty, and among others some of Rosalie's relations.

"Would it help them to have some English money to buy back the things they have lost?" asked Winnie at length. "I have a sovereign in my box up stairs," she added with some hesitation (for she had already devised a hundred ways of spending this for Dan and little Fan, whenever they could be found, and it would have seemed like relinquishing her belief in Dan's existence to appropriate the whole of it otherwise, yet this was a charge on the property which she certainly could not venture to mention to Rosalie); "I have a sovereign up stairs, Rosalie; I have promised half of it in my own mind to somebody, but the rest I should be so glad if you would take. It might buy something to wrap up your sister's baby in."

At this moment Mrs. O'Brien entered, and see-

ing Rosalie in tears, and yet at the same time evidently in such very friendly relations with Winnie, she asked what was the matter. Rosalie went into raptures over the generous heart of that charming child, and in a torrent of eloquent French, poured out a forcible narrative of the inundation, and the miseries it had caused.

Mrs. O'Brien was much affected. Her own heart was always kind and impressible, and now she caught some of Winnie's enthusiasm, and was roused to unusual energy. She was also very glad to be able to enter into her niece's charitable plans on this occasion. She thought it might prevent the child's heart being chilled by the failure of her projects about little Fan.

She was therefore induced, as the case was urgent (very contrary to her usual habits), to set forth that very afternoon to collect subscriptions among her acquaintances. Immediately after luncheon, the carriage was at the door, and Winnie accompanied her aunt, in the highest spirits.

Their success was considerable, although varied, and, in many cases, contrary to Winnie's expectations; the people who were tenderest in their lamentations frequently to her surprise finding they had the least to spare; and those, on the other hand, who at first excited her indignation by their cool way of investigating the facts, not seldom ending in contributing liberally.

There was one house especially where Winnie was greatly perplexed.

It belonged to an elderly single lady, and was

furnished with the most elaborate costliness and care, although not in a way Winnie admired.

The handsome ornaments were under so many glass cases, that she thought the drawing-room looked like a china shop; and the rich furniture and brilliant carpets were so carefully covered, that she felt it was like stepping over flower-beds to walk about the rooms, which feeling was increased to a nervous dread when Miss Dalton in a caressing voice, as if she was addressing a baby, begged the dear little girl to excuse her, but her dress was on the point of upsetting a china vase.

"It had been her grandmother's," Miss Dalton remarked, and what made her a little anxious about it was, that very morning her poor poodle Dandy had broken the fellow to it, and there was not another like it in England, except at her friend the Marquis of Carabbas.

She then proceeded to tell so many remarkable anecdotes about her doings and belongings, illustrated by the names of so many distinguished people, that Winnie became profoundly impressed with her importance, and began to entertain very large hopes as to her subscription. So that she was proportionately disappointed when, on Mrs. O'Brien's laying the case before her, Miss Dalton replied that she was really very sorry, but that she had a very strong feeling against English people withdrawing the help wanted by our own poor, and sending it to the other end of the earth. Mr. Dickens' very clever hit about Borrioboula Gha had long since convinced her of that. Although

she must confess, that even at home, she had seen so much ingratitude, and heard of so much imposture, and so much mismanagement of public money, and had so constantly found that people brought their troubles on themselves; that she found it more and more difficult to contribute to *anything* without feeling one might be doing more harm than good. She quite appreciated dear Mrs. O'Brien's benevolent feelings in undertaking so unpleasant an office, and she was sure Mrs. O'Brien would also understand her motives.

In the window, while this conversation was going on, a plain-looking person in a widow's cap was sitting writing. They had not been introduced to her, and Winnie had concluded that she was some kind of servant.

As they left the room, however, she rose, and accompanying them to the door, said, in a humble and timid way, as she took out her purse:

"If you would not think it a liberty, I should like to help a little. I lived some time in that part of France long ago, and I saw what misery such an inundation caused."

And as she put a few shillings in Mrs. O'Brien's hand, and Winnie looked up in her face and saw how the kind eyes lighted up the thin, worn-looking countenance, she quite loved her. And for a long time afterwards when she read the story of the widow's mite, she always pictured to herself the widow's face as like that of the poor lady who was Miss Dalton's companion.

That visit was their last, and when they got

into the carriage again Winnie fell into a long meditation.

"What are you thinking of?" asked Mrs. O'Brien at length, after watching for some time the thoughtful, little face.

"I was wondering whether Miss Dalton had got into the Contracting Chamber," she said.

Mrs. O'Brien of course did not understand what the Contracting Chamber was. And when she heard Winnie's version of Maurice's story, she observed that:

Maurice was very good, but he had very curious ideas. She was quite sure, however, that he did not mean Winnie to apply his stories to other people in that way, especially to grown up people.

"Yes," said Winnie coloring, "I remember Maurice said it was easy enough to see the other people's houses contracting from outside, but that was no help to any one about her own."

But between her aunt's injunctions not to apply the story to other people, and her uncle's objection to her making observations about herself, Winnie felt rather bewildered. She would ask Maurice when he came again.

Chapter II.

HOW many things were accumulating for Winnie to ask Maurice about, and how long it seemed before he came!

Meantime she asked Rosalie what her aunt could mean by Maurice having "curious ideas." The inundation, and the subscriptions in aid of the sufferers, which had on the whole been very considerable, had drawn Rosalie and Winnie into a far more intimate alliance. Rosalie thought madame must mean that Mr. Maurice was going by his own choice to bury himself in a parsonage in one of the lowest parts of London—a place (Rosalie had heard), near which no cabs approached within a mile, where carriages were never seen, into the recesses of which the police even dared not always venture; where, in short, there was no life, and nothing worth living for.

"Ah, mademoiselle," she observed, "your London is sad enough even by your queen's palaces. The people look like mutes at a funeral when they

are going to the opera. There are no fêtes, no flowers, no gaiety, no sunshine. What must it be then in those savage retreats where Mr. Maurice prepares to bury himself! I shudder to think of it."

"But," said Winnie, "the poor people must live there, and Maurice is going to try and help them."

"Ah, my poor child, you cannot understand. In my country it is the monks and nuns who thus immolate themselves. But Mr. Maurice proposes, not to institute a religious house in those dreary regions, which one could comprehend—religion exacts sacrifices—but to make a *home;* a home where one day he may doubtless bring some beautiful young lady, in Brussels point and white glacé, as his bride. But," she continued, "you English are, without doubt, a strange people, you weep little and you laugh little; but you feel, you give, you sacrifice. I suppose in your heavy atmosphere everything becomes so serious that there is little difference between your amusements and your martyrdoms, between a wedding and a religious profession."

How long Winnie's wishes made the delay in Maurice's return! For the last five years she had seen little of her brother. He had been at Oxford, or travelling, and since his ordination he had been hard at work in a curacy in one of the large manufacturing towns. And five years ago Winnie had been little more than a plaything for him. Now she began to feel he was her most intimate friend. She felt he quite understood her, and she felt she did not half understand him, which is an excellent

foundation for friendship. So she watched for him very eagerly; not sometimes without a little fear that the beautiful young lady in Brussels point and white glacé, whom Rosalie's imagination had pictured, might have appeared, and be detaining him.

Meantime she very often went to the rock-garden, and looked in a wistful way through the bars of the little gate where she had wished Maurice good-bye, and through which Rosalie had ruthlessly chased little Fan.

Not that she hoped ever to see Fan appear again. Her dismissal had been much too abrupt and rough, for Winnie to hope ever to see the little thin white face and the large questioning eyes peeping through those bars again.

But there is a strange attraction about the place where anything dear to us has vanished; and so, without questioning why, Winnie did very often climb on the marble seat by the fountain, and look over into the world outside.

One evening when she was thus engaged, when there was a large dinner-party in the house, and she was in the state of freedom she enjoyed on such occasions, when every one was too busy to attend to her, she saw a figure far down the hill coming up the little path across the waste ground.

It came on with long strides, and in an instant she knew it was Maurice. She was at the gate, she had undone the fastenings, she had rushed down the hill to meet him, in a minute.

"Softly, softly! little sister!" he said as he took her in his arms and kissed her. "At that pace, it

is no wonder you should have so soon come to the end of the world."

"Oh, Maurice, but I have *not!*" she exclaimed. "I have not come to the end of anything. So many things have happened since you were here. And I have no end of things to ask you. And there is a great dinner party, and they have begun, and no one expects you, so we may stay in the garden as long as we like. And you will tell me all about the Five Worlds, and the Contracting Chamber, and everything. And you will find out all about little Fan, and whether the chimney-sweep boys do go up the chimneys now, and how it was Dan broke his leg."

All which incoherent information, conveyed in a breathless manner before they reached the garden gate, left Maurice, figuratively speaking, in as breathless a state as Winnie herself.

The first thing to be explained was, of course, about little Fan. And to Winnie's immeasurable delight, she made Maurice believe both in Dan and little Fan.

Whether it was that the actual presence of the scene where little Fan had appeared—of the rose-tree from which she had modestly gathered her one rose, and where the roses which had been buds when she was there were now opening "so happy like" among the green leaves—of the gate through which the little face had peeped—of the stone seat from which the little plaintive voice had first been heard—whether it was that the sight of these things gave a reality to Winnie's narrative, or that

Maurice was more naturally credulous than other people, certain it is that he did believe that little Fan was no impostor, and that there was such a person as Dan.

This was a great point for Winnie to have gained. But the rest was even greater. Maurice admitted very sorrowfully that little chimney-sweeps were sometimes, even now, in spite of the law, sent up the old chimneys which the machines could not easily reach, and that their poor little limbs were often sorely bruised and grazed, and that a broken leg was not an impossible accident in such climbing.

Winnie was so delighted at this confirmation of little Fan's truth, that she did not think at the moment of mourning for the poor ill-used little sweeps, and Maurice had some difficulty in restraining her from instantly hastening to get dressed and go to the dinner-table to tell her Uncle O'Brien.

"Uncle ought to know," she said, "he may be telling some one else that little Fan is an impostor! And it must be dessert-time, and I would creep in by his side and whisper, and I am sure he would not be displeased."

But Maurice suggested quite a different line of action, which delighted Winnie still more. He said he would try to find out little Fan, and that he had great hope of succeeding. Her home must, he thought, be in some part of London not very far off. He could easily find out the ragged schools in any district, and the church with the high tower opposite the court would be a further guide.

Maurice promised, therefore, to set about the in-

quiry at once. And he counselled Winnie in the meantime to keep silence on the subject; his believing the story could not prove to any one else, he said, that it was true; and the triumph of truth would be so much greater if one day she could quietly tell her uncle and aunt that little Fan had been found and had proved as poor and as good as Winnie believed her to be.

This momentous question being settled Winnie reverted to her minor difficulties about the Contracting Chamber.

"Maurice," she said, "I want to know how any one ever got out of that dreadful chamber?"

"No one ever did," he replied.

"Then was there no way of making it grow wide again?" asked Winnie anxiously, "when once it had begun to contract, or at least of stopping it from getting any narrower?"

"There was nothing said about it in the book," he said.

"What book was it?" she inquired.

"It was a book called the Book which shows how things went wrong," replied Maurice. "It is a very large book and very old, and in I do not know how many volumes. And it is not finished yet. People are always adding sequels and new series to it."

"A very dull book, I should think," observed Winnie.

"Rather," he replied, "without the other Book, which ought always to be read with it."

"What is that," she asked.

"It is the Book which shows how things are set right," he replied in a gentle, grave voice.

"Is that book finished yet?" Winnie inquired.

"Yes, a long time ago," he replied, "but it is a strange thing no one ever finished reading it."

"I wonder at that," said Winnie. "I think it must be interesting. I should like to see it."

"It is the most interesting thing in the world to people who understand it," said Maurice. "The curious thing is that a great many people think they have read it through and finished it. But when (especially after reading another chapter of the other Book) they take it up again, they find they were mistaken, for there it is quite new again, with things in it they never saw before."

"Two very strange books," said Winnie musing, "the Book that never is finished writing, and the Book that never is finished reading."

But while she was thinking about it, voices were heard approaching. Mrs. O'Brien was coming to show her guests the rock garden, so that Winnie had no time to ask Maurice about the Five Worlds.

Maurice was obliged to go away again very early the next morning; and it would probably, he said, be some little time before he could come back. So it happened that Winnie was left for days to her own meditations so as to the Two Books and the Five Worlds. For, like so many children, it never occurred to her voluntarily to unlock the little world within to any one. She understood it indeed so lit-

tle herself that it would have been impossible for her to make any one else understand it. The germs and shapeless beginnings of all kinds of unknown things lay so strangely scattered about in the early twilight of that little chaotic world that it was not in Winnie's power to explain half of them to her self, much less to others, unless they brought the clue with them.

Besides, since she had overheard her uncle O'Brien so strongly disapproving of little girls thinking about their own feelings, she had felt it almost wrong to have any inward perplexities at all. Yet, try as she might, she could by no means bring herself to the "beautiful unconsciousness" of the kitten. Those troublesome ideas of right and wrong which never seemed to beset pussy, would come back so pertinaciously to Winnie, do what she would to banish them.

It happened also that during these days, unusually many things came to waken up these uneasy busy thoughts.

Mr. O'Brien had invited a little girl to stay with Winnie, thinking it would be good for her to be thrown more with other children, and that little Lucy Avenel was an unexceptionable little friend.

Now it cannot be denied that among children as among grown-up people, friendships can seldom be construed in this way, from outside, however convenient it might be. Moreover Lucy's tastes and subjects of interest and Winnie's were quite different, while at the same time Lucy was a child modeled after Rosalie's own heart. "A child," she

said, "that never had a torn frock nor dishevelled hair, a little being whose toilette it was a luxury to make, and who was as perfectly in order at the end of an evening as at the beginning." It was not in human nature, therefore, not to institute comparisons, with the materials for such striking antitheses continually at hand.

"Mademoiselle Wini," Rosalie would exclaim, "observe this little model! She stands as still as a stone while I arrange her tresses in any device I like. She rejoices in it, that wise little one! Every evening I can vary her style. Yesterday, severe and simple as a Greek statue; to-day graceful, flowing, romanesque as a heroine of your Sir Walter; to-morrow, in countless little luxuriant curls like a little court-lady of the Grand Monarque. With enthusiasm for one's art, and with a subject, what may not one accomplish? And the charming child all the time motionless as the waxen model of an artist in hair!"

Or at the end of the evening:

"See mademoiselle, not a hair out of place, not a ribbon disordered, whilst you!—how can I describe it—disorganized—demoralized—a chaos!"

Thus the comparisons went on, at first to Winnie's amusement, until Mademoiselle Rosalie, aggrieved at the small effect of her admonitions, grew more serious, and Winnie was provoked to contemptuous rejoinders; such as, that she had no ambition to be like a barber's block.

More serious replies from Rosalie; mournful prophecies that whatever Mademoiselle Winnie

thought in the bloom of her young years, she would remember her faithful Rosalie, alas, too late! Depressing generalizations as to the universal fate of people who cannot bear to hear other people praised, and who are too self-opinionated to learn in their youth;—until one evening, Winnie, distracted between her indignation at Rosalie's injurious comparisons and her anxiety to say nothing fierce to her guest, subsided into silence; when Rosalie, unable to let slip such an opportunity for a moral, whispered, "Ah! ah! Fie then! the poor little one is jealous. Away mademoiselle, with passions so dark, so destructive."

Then unable to stand any more, Winnie wrenched herself from the hands of her unconscious tormentor, and decisively finishing her own toilette, rushed into bed with the feeling that she was undoubtedly very naughty, yet that the whole system of things was terribly against her, so that naughtiness seemed a kind of fate.

At length the week ended, and Lucy's visit; and Mrs. O'Brien, knowing nothing of this secret drama, wondered that Winnie did not seem more sorry to part with her little friend.

Rosalie's accusation, however, sank deeper than she meant into Winnie's heart.

Was it indeed true that she was jealous? Such a mean, ungenerous fault, Winnie thought. Yet it certainly did seem like it when it made her so vexed to hear another little girl praised.

Certainly she must be in the Contracting Chamber, and it must already have got very narrow

and stifling, for her to have such petty, narrow feelings.

What was she to do?

It seemed to her she could herself easily add another chapter to Maurice's Book about things going wrong.

So Sunday came; and Winnie went to church with her aunt and uncle. It had not generally occurred to Winnie that sermons were things she had anything to do with except to sit as still as she could during the process, an achievement in which she generally assisted herself by counting the leaves on the trees outside, or by calculating how much money she would probably have accumulated by Christmas, and what presents she would buy with them, or by other abstruse arithmetical processes, varied with practical reflections as to how she would *not* bring up her own little girls, illustrated from the educational methods of Mademoiselle Rosalie, like the examples of bad grammar in Noel and Chapsal.

To-day, however, there was a new clergyman; and he had a deep sonorous voice, and his text was:

"*The way of transgressors is hard,*" which seemed to Winnie so remarkably applicable to her own recent history, that she was constrained to listen. And exceedingly disturbed she was by that sermon. The clergyman showed so very plainly and powerfully the misery of doing wrong, and led on the people whose wrong-doings he described to such very terrible ends that, Winnie could not take her eyes off his face. And when the service was fin-

ished she drove home from church in a silence very unusual with her, for she felt that, perhaps after all, Rosalie was right in her worst accusations and gloomiest prophecies, and that she was going along a very hard way to a very dark end indeed. And what was worst, she could see no way out of it at all.

The sermon, Winnie thought, was plainly a chapter out of the Book that showed how things went wrong. She wished very much some one would come and preach a sermon out of the Book which shows how things are set right.

She remained very quiet all the day, but in the evening twilight, when she was left alone with Mrs. O'Brien, the weight became too great for her little heart to bear, and drawing close to her aunt, on the sofa in the inner drawing-room, she said:

"Auntie, Rosalie says I am jealous. And I am dreadfully afraid I am. She used to make me so angry by her constantly praising Lucy. But oh, auntie, how am I to help it?"

Mrs. O'Brien tried most gently to soothe her, for Winnie's tears began to flow very fast. She assured her she did not believe she had meant any harm; but that if she had, she must be a dear good little girl and try and not do it again. Neither of which consolatory remarks at all comforted Winnie. For, in the first place, she felt sure she had meant harm, at least that she had felt so angry she scarcely knew what she might not have done. And in the second place, how *not* to do so any more was exactly what she could not find out.

So she was thrown back on herself, and on the longing to see Maurice.

However, Mrs. O'Brien's kindness comforted the little girl, if her words did not, and in a little while she fell asleep with her head on her aunt's shoulder.

She was awakened by hearing her uncle's voice say:

"Quite morbid! a child of her age! A most unnatural development of conscience! This will never do."

Then Winnie opened her eyes wide, having a consciousness that they were talking about her.

There was a kind of pitying tenderness in her uncle's manner to her which touched her very much, and yet made her feel very uncomfortable. She felt as if they thought something was the matter with her, and whether it was illness or naughtiness she could not make out; so that she was not sorry when her aunt said that as she had been rather agitated, she had better go to bed early, and go to sleep as fast as possible.

Opposite Winnie's bed two little walnut-wood bookshelves were suspended against the wall. They contained her little library. All the books were presents; and Winnie liked as she lay in bed to read over their names, and think about the people who had given them to her, and about the happy birthdays they recalled.

On the top of these shelves lay one small book, not standing upright like the others, but laid down

by itself. It was bound in purple morocco, and had gold rims and two gold clasps, which was perhaps one reason why Winnie had not thought of it so much as a book at all as a kind of sacred ornament or jewel, like the miniature of her father and mother which lay in the morocco case on her dressing-table, and which she looked at every morning and evening before she said her prayers: for in the beginning of the book was written her own name, and those of her father and mother, who had given it her years ago, when she was a very little child, and was sent away from their Indian home to Mr. Bertram's sister, Mrs. O'Brien, in England.

As Winnie lay on her little French bed, very wide awake, thinking things over, her eyes rested on this sacred book.

And it flashed on her:

"That is Maurice's Book, that shows how things are set right."

It was still quite light enough to read; so she sprang out of bed, and reaching up this book, took it back into bed with her, and folding herself up in an old Indian shawl of her mother's, unfastened the clasps with eager, trembling hands, and began to read.

You must not think Winnie had never read this book before. Almost every day, although not from that very volume, she read the Psalms and lessons to her aunt, as something which had to be done regularly, like her morning walk. Sometimes, moreover, just as the fresh air and open sky, and the flowers, and the songs of the birds, sent her

home from her daily walk refreshed and exhilarated, she could not tell how, this little daily journey over sacred ground left her, she scarcely knew how, refreshed and exhilarated in spirit.

But that was a different thing from opening the book, as she did that night, to get her questions answered, and her heart set at rest about right and wrong.

She felt, as she unfastened the golden clasps, although she could not have expressed her feeling like some one opening the golden doors of a temple, in whose silent recesses, if you listened, you would hear a voice, which would tell you all you wanted most to know.

And the first time any of us open that book, to hear the voice speaking from it to us, is a great day for us, whether we remember it in after years or not. The first thing Winnie read in it was the text at the beginning, in her mother's writing:

"Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins;" and:

"We love him because he first loved us."

The chapter and verse were not put, but Winnie thought it must be from St. John, because of there being so much about love. She looked through the Gospel in vain, and then she turned to the Epistle; but before she found what she sought, her eye rested on the words:

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness;" and just above:

"The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Hundreds of times, as she had heard those words, especially those about confessing, they came to her that night, as Maurice had said the words of that book so often did to people, like something quite new; new in power and freshness, and yet sacred with the authority and tenderness of things long familiar.

She did not read any more that evening. She thought she had found the answer she wanted; and kneeling down by her bedside, she prayed in interrupted, broken words:

"Our Father, which art in heaven, I am come to confess my faults. I have been jealous—I am afraid I have. I have been cross—I know I have. I am very sorry. I want so very much not to do it again; but I do not know how to help it. Oh, do forgive me, and do help me. For Jesus Christ's sake."

That was all Winnie's prayer; but she felt very much lighter in heart for it.

And then she put the Bible under her pillow, and felt as if it were a friend close to her; and very soon she fell asleep.

A few minutes afterwards, when Mrs. O'Brien came very softly into her room, she found Winnie deep in her first sleep, with a happy smile on her rosy little face, and one hand unconsciously stretched out under her pillow clasping the book whose gold rim was peeping out underneath; as if it had been a mother's hand.

Tender and true as a mother's hand indeed it is, little Winnie, leaning down to thee out of heaven, to lead thee on step by step, and to uphold thee while it leads!

Mrs. O'Brien looked a long time at the sleeping child; and as she stooped down very softly to kiss her, her eyes filled with tears. She would not on any account have attempted to loosen the clasp of the little hand, but she drew the sheet over the uncovered arm.

And Winnie's was not the only prayer offered by her bedside that night, nor the only confession.

The next day brought Winnie a great joy.

As she was doing her French lessons, Maurice's face appeared at the open window of the school-room, and by the brightness in it she knew at once what he had to say; and springing up with one of those sudden movements which so disconcerted Rosalie, and endangered dress and furniture, she threw herself into her brother's arms, exclaiming:

"I know what you mean, Maurice. It is all right. You have found little Fan!"

Having conciliated Rosalie by a courteous greeting and a request for permission to abstract her pupil for a time, Maurice led Winnie into the garden for a confidential talk.

He had found little Fan. But his face was graver about it than Winnie liked.

"And there is such a person as Dan, Maurice, and he is a dear good brother, like you—I am sure

he is! And Fan took him the rose? I am sure she did!"

"There is such a little man as Dan," Maurice replied, "and he seems to me a kind brother to Fan, and they seem to love each other very dearly. And I found the withered roses, wrapped up very carefully in a little bit of old newspaper, under Dan's pillow."

"I knew it! I knew it!" Winnie exclaimed, jumping and clapping her hands; "it is all true! My poor dear little Fan! And Rosalie will know it! And it is true about Dan's going up the chimney, and everything, Maurice, isn't it? It is all true. Oh, how I wish uncle would come home, that I might tell him!"

"It is all quite true, Winnie—too true, I am afraid," said Maurice; "for poor little Dan's leg is no better than it was, and I am not sure if it ever will be."

In her delight at the clearing of little Fan's character, and the restoration of Dan from a myth to an historical person, Winnie had for the moment utterly lost sight of Dan's sufferings and Fan's poverty; and the recollection not only completely sobered her, but brought a very sorrowful shade over her heart and face, as she walked on silently with her hand in Maurice's.

Very soon, however, her confidence in the general cheerfulness of life, and the power of doctors to make sick people well, revived, and she said:

"We will tell auntie, Maurice, and you know we can ask Dr. Dee to go and see Dan. Auntie

says Dr. Dee's cures are miraculous. I heard her say so yesterday. And he always makes me well in a day or two."

Maurice's face did not quite respond to Winnie's hopes. However, he said:

"We will try, at all events. We will do every thing for Dan that can be done."

"Do you know," she said, "I have still half a sovereign of my own, and that will go a long way, I should think, in buying nice things for Dan to eat. And oh, Maurice, do you think auntie will ever let me go and see little Fan?"

Maurice sat down on a garden chair, and taking Winnie's hands in his looked very kindly down on her eager up-turned face.

"I have asked auntie," he said, "and she says you may go to-morrow."

Winnie's joy once more quite overwhelmed her sorrow.

"Aunt O'Brien says you may go on one condition," he resumed, "that is, if I will assure her it is not too sad a sight for a little girl like you to see. She says you have no control over your feelings. And it *is* a sad sight. I cannot say it is not. But I think you could bear it, Winnie. And I am sure it must do any one good to see Dan's patient little face. And I think you *would* bear it, Winnie," he concluded. "You would not make the poor boy think his case worse than it is, by crying too much, or by looking dreadfully grieved!"

A soft, steady, womanly light dawned in the depths of Winnie's eyes, as she opened them wide and looking up at Maurice said:

"I would not make Dan worse for the world, Maurice. I won't *begin* to cry a bit, because if one once begins I don't see how any one can help going on. Besides," she continued, her face brightening up again, "you know we are not going only to *look at* Dan, as if he were a melancholy picture, or a story book written to make people cry. We are going to *help* him, Maurice."

The whole of the day was full of busy preparations. Everything and every person seemed now to combine to help Winnie in her plans about little Fan, as, before, all had seemed to conspire to hinder her.

There had been a dinner-party, so that there was even more than a usual store of delicacies and all kinds of nice nourishing things to take to Dan.

Mrs. O'Brien brought out an old frock, hat, and woollen cloak of Winnie's for little Fan, and quite a stock of warm wraps and clean soft linen rags for Dan.

Mr. O'Brien gave her a whole sovereign to spend, under Maurice's directions, for the orphans, and proposed getting each of them into a separate orphan asylum; a plan, however, which Winnie secretly determined must never be carried out.

Winnie herself rummaged out a little library of story-books and pictures, out of which after many discussions as to Dan's probable tastes and literary capabilities, she was allowed to select a Bible picture-book in which the people wore very brilliant coats of many colors. Winnie thought these would be very fascinating to both brother and

sister, except that at the last she was on the point of keeping it back, because, as she said, little Fan might think the Bible was like the church with the tall tower where no one belonged but the people who had fine clothes.

Even Rosalie was entirely won over, and entered warmly into Winnie's schemes. She had the highest opinion of Mr. Maurice's judgment. She thought him, although a little eccentric (but then he was English), a gentleman of very distinguished manners, and moreover (although a Protestant) a kind of St. Vincent de Paul. She was anxious, moreover, to atone for her previous scepticism. Accordingly, just as Winnie and Maurice were starting in the carriage, she handed to Winnie an elegant little basket which her clever French fingers had twisted the night before out of paper and wire, and in which were arranged among dark leaves with as much taste as if for a fruit picture, six beautiful peaches, which she had risen early that morning to purchase at the fruiterer's. This attention so overcame Winnie with penitence, gratitude, and a flood of good resolutions, as almost to overpower at the outset her heroic purposes of self-control.

The carriage passed very quickly from the high open ground where Winnie lived, through a suburb of large houses with high garden walls, with carriages frequently waiting at the gates; then through a district of small houses, behind little railed gardens in which very low arithmetical powers might have counted the shrubs and flowers, and the chief vehicles were the baker's and butcher's cart;

then through broad thoroughfares noisy with omnibuses and cabs; and finally into a region of narrow streets and dingy old-fashioned houses below the level of omnibuses or cabs, or bakers' carts, where the vehicles were heavy lumbering coal-wagons and drays, and where hats and shoes were, among the children, quite a rare distinction.

At length they came in sight of a high church tower, and Maurice stopped the carriage, helped Winnie out with the parcels, and silently the brother and sister walked along until they came close to the church, and then under a narrow covered way between two houses, so narrow that they could not walk abreast, they entered an alley with no outlet at the other end, where five or six ragged boys (a great deal too cool and experienced to pay any particular attention to the gentleman and little lady) were shouting over pitch and toss, and at almost every door sat or stood a ragged little girl hoisting a ragged baby just as big as herself.

"Those are the boys who would have snatched at little Fan's flowers," whispered Winnie, with a slight shudder.

At the end of the court Maurice entered a low door, and asked if he might see the little boy with the broken leg.

A sullen looking man sat smoking by the fire, but vouchsafed no answer, except a toss of his head in the direction of the staircase.

Before they could reach this, however, a woman appeared from a mysterious back room, and with officious politeness, but in a shrill voice which

seemed as if it had got so high up in the practice of scolding that it never could be got down again for any milder use, told them how condescending it was of gentlefolks like them to come into such poor dark holes, warned the dear young lady to take care of her pretty dress, and offered to guide them upstairs herself. Winnie was very glad that Maurice declined her assistance, for the woman's shrill compliments grated against her more than the sulky silence of the man, although as they went upstairs she heard him muttering something not pleasant about "parsons," and a man's house being his own.

Up and up they went, and round and round, past doors at which strange faces peeped at them curiously, until they came to the garret.

At first Winnie thought Maurice had made a mistake and brought her to a lumber-room, for there was nothing in it but two old boxes, and the roof sloped to the floor.

But as her eyes recovered from the dazzle of daylight after the dark stairs, she saw something stirring from a mat on the floor in a corner near the window, and then she perceived that it was the thin wan face of a litle boy who had raised himself on his elbow to look at the visitors.

Large dark eager eyes, like Fan's looked out from the thin hollow cheeks with a wistful longing, as if through prison-bars.

But as he recognised Maurice, a happy child's smile beamed out over all his face, and he sank down again as if quite at home.

Winnie understood why Fan had felt it worth

while to take such pains to waken up that smile. For a moment it took all the old wizened suffering look out of the face, and made it the face of a happy child, yet with a depth of expression about it that only comes out of suffering.

She needed no introduction, she had no doubt who it was, but she lingered in a shy way near the door, until Maurice led her forward with Rosalie's basket and a bunch of roses in her hand, and said:

"This is the little girl who gave your sister the rose, Dan. She is my little sister. She thought you might like some fruit, and she has brought you some."

It did not seem in the family to say, "thank you," but Dan nodded his approbation, and had evidently his own ideas of good manners, for he did not attempt to taste the fruit until Maurice had expressly told him to do so, and given one peach into his hand, and then pointing to Winnie, he said:

"Give one to *her*."

Winnie's honesty would not allow her to appropriate all Dan's gratitude, so coloring very much, she said:

"They are not my peaches, they are Rosalie's. But the roses are mine, Dan, they are from my own rose-bush."

"I wish Fan was here," said Dan, "she'll be dreadful cut up to miss you. She don't scarcely never leave me. But uncle sent her for a ha'porth of gin."

In a little while Maurice sitting on a box near

the bed had drawn the little boy into conversation. Perfectly unencumbered with the rules about bad or good manners, or titles or forms of address, Dan was in this respect on firmer ground with Maurice than if he had belonged to a class a little bit higher, and had thus come under the restraint of conventional rules imperfectly understood, and only practised at rare intervals. Next to the ease of manner of a perfect gentleman is the ease of manner of an unmitigated ragged boy, especially, provided the ragged boy is a natural gentleman; although in some points, it must be confessed, there are differences. And Dan was by nature a gentleman, as Winnie knew from the moment he offered her the peach. Indeed, his good manners were rooted in something a good deal deeper than any codes of etiquette written or unwritten, as Winnie felt while she listened to him and Maurice.

Not that Dan said much, at least at first; he seemed to devour Maurice's words as he spoke, looking into his face with those great questioning eyes, and every now and then nodding his head and smiling his approval. It was, indeed, evident that Maurice and he quite understood each other.

By degrees, however, Dan began to speak himself.

"You see," said Maurice softly, "God has not forgotten you."

"He never don't," said Dan, "night nor day."

"God doesn't forget you, even when you don't get much to eat," said Maurice, to whom Winnie

had revealed her anxieties that Dan should not get perplexed on this subject.

"*Mother* couldn't always give us bread, if we cried for it," replied Dan, "and she was as good as could be, and teacher said God is better nor her. Jesus took 'em up in His arms," he continued, "teacher said he did. And I know He'd help me and Fan, if He saw any way. Of course there *is* ways," concluded Dan, "for teacher said there was nothing He couldn't do. But He won't never take none but the *right* way. In course He couldn't. So we must wait till He has found it."

"Perhaps our Saviour *has* found the right way now," said Maurice, "and has sent us. You think a great deal, Dan!" he continued, as he looked at the little thin suffering face, and thought how much Dan had learned, if he had learned to wait for God.

"Yes," said Dan confidentially, "but most at nights. The court's quiet then, and I don't feel so much that I should like to be out at play with 'em all in the sun. And it's all dark, except up there in the sky. And the stars come out, such lots of them, for they're not the same, and they don't keep in one place." (Dan announced this as a discovery.) "They keep going on. Sometimes there's four or five of 'em in a bunch, and sometimes three in a row. And then there's one or two brighter than all the others, that don't wink, but keep looking at me so kind and steady like. They make me think of mother, and of our Saviour, and of the children in heaven. And I 'most think I can hear

'em singing up there sometimes." Then after a little pause, he suddenly looked up with a penetrating look at Maurice, and said:

"What becomes of them stars all day long?"

"They are always there," said Maurice, "only they are hidden in the sunshine."

Dan nodded as if confirmed in a conviction.

"I thought so," he said, "and that's how it is with heaven, and the Lord, and the children up there. It's just the same as with the stars."

"What do you mean, Dan?" said Maurice, anxious to bring out the boy's thought.

"Why they're *always there*," said Dan in a low, happy voice. "They're always there, looking and smiling on us; only there's too much dazzle for us to see 'em, or hear 'em, and too much noise."

Maurice did not say anything for some time. Then he said:

"You have very happy thoughts, Dan, I think God gives them to you."

Dan nodded assent.

"There's another thing I think at night," he said, eager now his heart was opened by such rare comprehension and sympathy to pour out the long pent-up feelings, "and that makes me 'most happier than anything else. Teacher said them stars is miles and miles away; and as I look up, and up, I think I see they are. The world seems so high and so wide, there's no end to it. And that's very good to feel."

"You think you won't always be imprisoned in this little narrow room," said Maurice.

"No," said the boy, "but what I feel most is how small I am in this big world. At first I didn't like to feel that. It felt cold like. But now I like it 'most best of all. 'Cause, you know, there's Jesus; and teacher said it all belongs to Him, the world do; and when I think of Him, it's so good to feel small. His arms is all round me, as mother's was when I was a little child. And it's so good to nestle in quite close like, and feel so helpless and so little, and He so kind and strong."

Just then Winnie heard little feet climbing up the stairs, and in a minute little Fan appeared laboriously carrying a jug of water nearly as big as herself, which she all but dropped in her amazement at seeing Winnie and Maurice.

Dan, however, encouraged her to come in.

"It's only your own little lady, Fan," he said.

At first the little girls were rather shy with each other, but as Maurice continued his conversation with Dan, and examined his broken leg to see what could be done, by degrees the confidence Rosalie had so roughly broken was restored; Winnie opened the bundle containing the frock and hat, and the basket with the cold soup and jellies, and by the time Maurice rose to go, she had got the length of delicately suggesting to little Fan how very nice it was to wash one's hands and face.

When they were about to leave, the Bible picture-book dropped by accident on the floor. Winnie picked it up, but did not propose giving it to Dan.

Maurice thought she was shy, and was proceed-

ing to give it in her name, when she stopped him, and flushing very red, whispered, "Don't, Maurice, please. I don't think Dan would like it."

He yielded in some perplexity. And they took leave, Maurice promising to return very soon.

"Will *she* come, too?" said Dan stretching out his hand to shake Winnie's.

And as that rare sunbeam of a smile broke over the wan, little face again, Winnie very nearly forgot her resolution and burst into tears.

Very silent she was as they drove home, until Maurice asked her why she did not wish to give Dan the picture-book.

"Oh, Maurice, how could I?" she said; "he knows so much better than that. How could I give Dan such pictures of our Saviour as those! There *is* one in auntie's dressing-room," she added, "that might be good enough. The face listening at the closed door, you know. But, perhaps, auntie mightn't quite like to give that to Dan."

"Are you pleased or disappointed, Winnie," asked Mrs. O'Brien, when Winnie came back with an earnest, thoughtful face.

"I don't quite know, auntie," she said, "I thought we would have done more for Dan; that he would have wanted more. But what we can do seems so little and poor. God has made him so happy already."

"We can help about his broken leg, Winnie," said Maurice, "and get him into a home where he will be kindly nursed and have plenty of good

food, and where little Fan may learn to read, and to wash her face, and that will be something."

Winnie shook her head. And at length the long-controlled feelings gave way, and she burst into tears.

"What is the matter, darling?" Mrs. O'Brien asked.

"I am so sorry for Fan," sobbed Winnie; "I'm so sorry for poor little Fan."

"Why, little Fan's troubles are over, I hope, Winnie," said Maurice.

"Oh, no," said Winnie. "Oh, no! I'm so sorry for little Fan!"

"Why, what is the matter, my child?" said her aunt.

"Oh," sobbed Winnie, "when Dan dies!"

"But I have great hope Dan will live and get well, Winnie," said Maurice. "Why are you so distressed?"

"It isn't that he's so ill," moaned Winnie, "but he's so good. All the children in the books die when they talk like that. And I'm so sorry for Fan."

By degrees, however, Winnie was reassured. Maurice thought the leg a more hopeful case than he had at first; and a long talk ensued as to the best way of helping the orphan children.

That evening when she went to bed, Winnie led Maurice to the door of her aunt's dressing-room, and showed him the picture she thought would do for Dan.

"Only," she said, "the Face is so very sad, and

the door is shut against Him. And Dan's door isn't shut, Maurice, is it?"

And when a week afterwards Mrs. O'Brien drove Winnie to the home for sick children, and she saw Dan laid on a clean, fresh bed, with the look of suffering greatly lightened on his face, and heard the tone of delight in which little Fan (who as a special privilege was permitted to wait on her brother), told how he had walked that day from one end of the room to the other, her fears were calmed, and she even admitted that although God had done so much for Dan already, He had left something for them to do, and she was so glad He had.

And in the evening after they returned, as she was having a twilight talk with Maurice, Winnie said:

"Oh, Maurice, I do hope I have found the way out of the Contracting Chamber."

"I think you have, Winnie," he said. "It's when we ourselves are in the middle of the world that it grows so narrow and poor to us; is it not? Fan's world was larger than yours, because Dan was in the middle of it, and not herself. But Dan's world is widest of all. Do you know why?"

"God is in the middle of it," she replied very softly; "isn't that it?"

"Like the sun," said Maurice, "and that makes it all so wide and bright."

"And oh, Maurice," concluded Winnie very seriously, "I do hope God will help me never to get into the middle of my world again!"

Chapter III.

"NOW, Maurice," said Winnie, "about the Five Worlds, and about little Grace Leigh."

To explain these words, it is necessary to go back three hours, three hours of that precious day to which Winifred had been looking forward so long as quite a little lifetime of delight.

For it was the first of October, and Winifred's birthday. She had been offered various kinds of entertainment by her aunt and uncle, including an elaborate children's ball, a conjurer, and a ventriloquist; but she had chosen in preference to everything else in the world, a whole day with Maurice, stipulating only for a visit in the morning from little Fan.

Maurice had come to stay at Mr. O'Brien's on the previous evening, that it might be really a whole day; and Winnie had parted from Rosalie with the most urgent entreaties not to wake her a minute after seven o'clock, that she might not lose a moment of the treasured hours.

But before that hour arrived, the child's light morning slumbers were broken by the rustle of a dress and the soft closing of a door.

"Oh, Rosalie!" she exclaimed, starting up, "you are trying to impose on me. It is seven o'clock."

"It is scarcely six," rejoined Rosalie, reopening the door; "and madame gave the most express orders you were to sleep till seven at earliest. Tranquillize thyself, little enthusiast, the day will last thee long enough."

The door closed again.

But Winnie had caught sight of something which quite neutralized any orders to sleep. Over the walnut bookshelves was suspended a large new engraving of the picture she loved—the thorn-crowned Saviour listening at the closed weed-grown door.

And over the picture, resting on its frame, was placed, in large illuminated letters, blue and crimson and gold, wreathed with spring-flowers, the text, "*We love Him because He first loved us.*" It seemed to Winnie like a message from unseen worlds, from the unseen Saviour in heaven, and from the absent mother whose loving hands had written those very words so many years before in the little Bible which, since that Sunday evening, the child always kept under her pillow at night.

A kind of tender awe came over the child's heart as she sat up gazing at her new treasures, until her eyes filled with tears.

No doubt she thought Maurice had something to

do with it; but how could Maurice, or any one on earth, remember what was written inside the Bible which never left her room, or know about that Sunday evening when in the summer twilight those words had first grown so dear to her?

As Winnie gazed and wondered, this feeling of awe deepened within her, as if presences she could not see were around her, and had been around her without her knowing it all her life; as if she were half-waking, and caught the soft sweep of angels' raiment passing away, and the faint echo of retreating footsteps, and the whisper of voices just hushed; and the dim smile of holy vanishing faces that had been watching her sleep; and as if, could she only *quite awake*, she would see and hear wonders of love and joy—hear not only the voices but the words.

"I wonder if people ever do quite awake and hear and see all this? I will ask Maurice about it all," she thought. And then came the joyful recollection, "Maurice is to be here all day, all day."

And she laid her head back on her pillow just to be still a little while, and measure over the joy again and again. Nearly an hour before seven to think of it beforehand, and then twelve, thirteen, fourteen hours to be with Maurice, to ask every question she could think of, and hear all about everything.

And through all her thoughts those words kept shining on her, "*We love Him, because He first loved us.*" One word after another. "*We*—that is Maurice, and Dan, and I. Yes, I myself," thought

Winnie; "yes, I do love Him. Yes, *love;* who could help it? Yet how little. Oh, I wish it was better, then I should be better. I love auntie, and I love papa and mamma; but then I have seen them. If I could only see Him, look up into His face just once, and see Him looking on me, I should know Him so much better. I wonder if He thinks how much easier it is to see. He certainly must. Then how tenderly He must pity us who cannot."

And then her eyes and heart ran on to the word "*first,*" in large letters of deep blue, starred over with gold. "First! first!" she thought. "What does 'first' mean? When did 'first' begin? Did it *ever* begin? Before we ever thought of Him, before we were born, before He died, before God gave His only begotten Son. Yes, the 'loved' comes before the 'gave.' Did it *ever* begin? What was there before 'first?' What was there before love," thought Winnie, losing her thoughts altogether, like a lark as we watch it singing itself out of sight into the sunshine. And then once more her eyes lighted on that unfathomable simple word, and, like a lark to its nest, her heart came down to the human love that gave her these birthday gifts to-day. For she thought, "no one but God knew how I love those words, so He must have put it into some one's heart to send them to me." From "Did that love ever begin?" she came down to, "Yes, it is *always beginning.* It is never I that begin. It is God who is always beginning to do me good and to bless me. If I awake in the morning, and thank Him, it is because He was awake all

night watching me. If I look up to Him, it was because He was first looking at me. If I remember Him, it is because He is always first remembering me. He is always before us, always loving us first, forever, and every day, and forever."

This was Winnie's birthday hymn, although she could no more have put it in words than the lark his song.

And then came back the first wonder, who could have chosen that text, and painted it so beautifully for her? which wonder in all its ramifications kept her busy thoughts fully occupied till all the clocks struck seven; the church clock solemnly from the hill-side below, with a sweet Sunday music in its tone; the house clock, ostentatiously from the stable, like a clock of respectability that knew it was not every one that had a stable clock; the kitchen clock decisively, like a clock of business; the little French clock in the nursery, hastily, like a clock of pleasure, always late, and, therefore, always in a hurry; and finally, heavily booming in deep tones behind all the rest, the great clock of St. Paul's, like a clock of state, burdened with the responsibility of keeping three millions of people in time.

Winnie counted the last stroke of the last of them like a miser his gold, and then she rose triumphantly, and said to herself:

"Now I have a right to get up. No one can say I have not done what auntie told me. The day has begun."

It was difficult for Winnie to give even such a

parenthetical welcome as gratitude required to the other presents which awaited her on her coming down stairs, so eager was she to come to the solution of the matter of the illuminated text. A flush of pleasure did, indeed, crimson the little bright face as she saw the wonderful erection of leaves and flowers with which Rosalie had embowered her own peculiar chair at the breakfast table; and she inwardly resolved never to be provoked again with Rosalie all her life long. The little ruby locket on her plate, and the brilliantly-bound books beside it, ensured a fervent hug for her uncle and aunt; and the India workbox of inlaid silver, ebony, and ivory, with the inscription upon the inside, "For our darling child Winifred," brought tears at the thought of the absent parents who were thinking of her, and could not be thanked. But the love which sent the things having thus found its response in Winnie's heart, the *things* themselves soon took that place in her regard which the most costly things must, which have never been consecrated to a value not their own, by waiting or privation, or self-denial. And her thoughts reverting to the text, she whispered to Maurice:

"Who painted those words?"

"Little Grace Leigh," he said.

"But who is little Grace Leigh? And how could she know?" rejoined Winnie.

"She is the daughter of the curate of St. Cuthbert's. And how could she know what?" replied Maurice.

"What mamma wrote inside my Bible" said Winnie in a low whisper, coloring.

"I do not understand," said Maurice, shaking his head. "We will talk about it after breakfast."

And so, grave and happy with the possession of one mystery and the expectation of more, Winnie returned to her canopy, and sat, a depth of delicious wonder in her great soft eyes, speculating what her uncle meant by saying she looked imperial enough for ox-eyed Juno on her golden throne, or what Maurice meant by suggesting a resemblance to the Norn of the future sitting beside the Well by the roots of the green Tree of life.

Then Mr. O'Brien and Maurice branched off into a comparison of the Old World stories of the Greeks and the Goths, which left her imagination free to return to her own little world. And so the time passed until Mr. O'Brien had left for London, and Mrs. O'Brien for household consultations, and Maurice and Winnie were left alone by the dining-room fire, he in the easy chair, and she on the hearth-rug before him.

"And now, Maurice," she said, "about the Five Worlds and about little Grace Leigh."

"Grace Leigh must explain herself to you," he said. "If I described her to you, when you saw her you might say, 'I do not see any resemblance between your picture and the original.' We see in people what we know in them. And we can only know in them what we have faculties to know. We must all learn each other for ourselves. My Grace Leigh would not be your Grace Leigh, or, at

least our pictures would be different, and neither of them," he added, musing, "after all, would be quite Grace Leigh herself."

"Oh, Maurice," said Winnie, "that is exactly the kind of thing that puzzles me, and that I cannot bear. It is like what Uncle O'Brien told me about the pictures in our eyes. He said we, none of us, see the same world, or, indeed, see the world at all, but only a photograph of it in our eyes. Yet there is a world outside, I am quite sure; for if you or I fell into the fire, we should both be burned; and we could not be burned in a photograph in our eyes. There *is* a world, and there *is* Grace Leigh, for she painted those words; so, please, tell me about her."

"You decline metaphysics," he said. "But I was not talking metaphysics, but remarking a plain fact which you will have to learn. Portrait painters cannot paint like the sun, because they see not with the eyes only, but the mind, and they paint not with colors only, but with the soul. And so when we describe other people's characters, we often unconsciously describe ourselves far more than the people we are speaking of. Especially when we speak of their motives, or our suspicions about them."

"I understand," said Winnie. "Perhaps that is often the reason why Rosalie finds fault with me."

"Not a safe conclusion, little sister," was the reply; "you should always take your moral illustrations from the other side; for example, 'That is why I find fault with Rosalie.'"

"That is rather terrible, however," said Winnie, meditatively. "Perhaps when we think we are very clever, and have found out some one's faults, some one else who is cleverer, is reading our faults in our fault-finding."

"Very probably," said Maurice. "All the portraits men draw of each other are mirrors as well as portraits. But not *only* mirrors," he continued; "I did not say we saw only our own characters in other people's, but that we only see as much as our characters enable us to see. And therefore, I would rather not try to describe Grace Leigh to you; particularly, Grace Leigh," he added," because I am learning every month to see more in her myself."

"Is she very clever then?" said Winnie.

"I should not have thought of calling her exactly clever," he said; "and yet I remember one day, Mr. Leigh's landlady, Mrs. Treherne, told me Miss Leigh was as clever as a college-gentleman, for she could read Greek. But when I asked Grace, she said it was only with helping Harry; and Homer was so beautiful, with the heroes and sea, it was impossible to help getting to understand him."

"Grace Leigh reads Greek!" said Winnie, awed to a respectable distance; "and I only read a little French. But who is Harry, and who is Mrs. Treherne?"

"Mrs. Treherne is the greengrocer who keeps the shop over which Mr. Leigh lives, and Harry is Grace's only brother, four years younger than herself. And she loves him and takes care of him like a little mother."

"Then she is good, at all events," said Winnie, "good, and reads Greek. But does any one who reads Greek live over a greengrocer's shop?" said Winnie, in some perplexity; "however, at all events, Maurice, you can tell me whether she is tall and pretty, and what color her eyes and hair are?"

"Indeed, I cannot," said Maurice; "I never thought what color her eyes are. People have such different ideas about color. Homer calls the sea wine-colored, and there has been much discussion as to what he could mean, because, you know, some wines are golden, and some are ruby, and certainly the sea is neither."

"Ah," said Winnie, decisively, "that is easily explained. Homer was blind. Auntie told me so, one day."

"Excuse me, little sister," he replied, with a grave little smile, "that is a kind of criticism we do not apply to poets who lived three thousand years ago. When a poet of our own times says something the critics do not understand, they naturally say, poor man, he is blind. But when a poet has been dead a thousand years, or so, we try to understand what he means. And in that way sometimes we find it was we who were blind, and learn to see."

"But what has that to do with Grace Leigh's eyes?" asked Winnie.

"Just this," he replied. "One day, when I was looking up at her, I thought I understood what Homer meant by calling the sea wine-colored. He

did not think of its color so much as of its depth and transparency. He meant I think, that it was dark and bright, impenetrable and clear. And that is what Grace Leigh's eyes are Sometimes they seem an entrance into an unfathomable world of thought, and sometimes they shine as if all her heart lay open in them like a little child's."

"Well," said Winnie, "I can always tell what color the sea is, and what color people's eyes are. The sea is blue, and sometimes it is green; and when I see Grace Leigh I shall know what color her eyes are. And her hair?"

"It must be fair, I suppose," said Maurice, "because her face always reminds me of one of Raphael's early pictures of the Madonna in the Louvre."

"Let me see," said Winnie, counting over her information, "Grace Leigh reads Greek, and is a mother to her little brother, and her hair is like a picture of Raphael's, and her eyes are wine-colored, or like the sea. And she painted me that beautiful text. Oh, Maurice, when can I see her?"

"This evening, perhaps," said Maurice, "we will see."

And Winnie clapped her hands with delight, and on the subject of Grace Leigh was satisfied.

"And now, Maurice," she resumed, "about the Five Worlds. When I said one day—oh, so long ago!—that I had come to the end of the world, you said you knew five worlds, and that you had scarcely got beyond the beginning of any of them."

"Did I say only five?" he said.

"At least five, I think you said, Maurice."

"Then I must have been thinking about the Expanding Palace," he said.

"What is that?" she asked.

"It is the other side of the story of the Contracting Chamber," he replied.

"Oh, tell me then, at once," she said, settling herself into an attitude of enrapt listening, with her chin on the palm of her hand, gazing up into his face.

"But it is an allegory, Winnie."

"I do not care. Call it anything you like. Only begin."

And Maurice began:

THE EXPANDING PALACE.

"All the dwellers in the palace of the Queen I told you of were not faithless to their trust. I will tell you the history of one who was faithful to it. Her name was Ethel. Her especial charge were the orphan little girls of those who had died belonging to the Queen's household. Dearly she loved her work, and dearly the little forlorn ones loved her. Every afternoon, when her attendance at the Court permitted, a band of these children might be seen trooping to her apartment. There she welcomed them, taught them, and shared their plays, and listened to all their little confidences, till the forlorn, unanswered, orphaned look passed from the little faces, because each felt there was one in the world to whom all their little interests, and joys, and sorrows were not childish trifles, but matters of

true, hearty, loving interest. Ethel would have laughed if any one had talked to her of a reward for her work of love. The work was her joy, and the love was her life. But, nevertheless, or rather all the more, the reward came naturally, necessarily, inevitably, as, in the other case, the punishment of the Contracting Chamber.

"One evening Ethel was sitting in her apartment alone (when the children were asleep, each in her own nest), in that happy weariness which follows labors of love, when a slight click attracted her attention. You remember that these apartments had many *mirrors*, as well as many *windows*, and that in the process of contracting, the horror of her position was concealed from the selfish inmate by the transformation of the windows into mirrors. Just the reverse of this now took place before the eyes of Ethel. Looking around, she saw that the reflecting metal had dropped like a gauzy veil from one of these mirrors, and that it had become a window into another chamber, or rather (as she afterwards ascertained) into another world. At first there was a dimness about the light from within this new chamber; but gradually beautiful and strange forms revealed themselves to her, illuminated by a soft magical light, pale and silvery, like moonlight, yet with a kind of torch-like splendor about it. She longed that the window might become a door, and that she might go into this new world. As she stood and gazed, two maidens appeared beside her, clad in white robes pure as a lily, and glistening with a silky sheen. The one was

called Humility; and she was scarcely more than a child, and her eyes had a happy upward look, because she was always rejoicing in something above herself. The name of the other was Love; and her eyes had a sweet downward glance, because she was always watching the need of others to see how she could serve. And in their hands was a key which they gave to Ethel, each with a tender embrace, Humility with the clinging caress of a child, and Love with the tender circling of a mother's arms, and then vanished."

"Did they leave her alone, then?" asked Winnie.

"I only said they appeared and vanished," replied Maurice; "I believe they had been with her long before, and stayed with her always afterwards. But they vanished from her sight. Then Ethel took the key. The name engraven on it was Work; and the wards were difficult to fit in. She could not open the door with it that night, nor the next; but she was persevering, and at length the lock yielded. All at once with a spring as if it had been the easiest thing in the world (as you will find with one difficult door after another, if you persevere) the magic door sprang open, and the new World lay free to her. The first thing before her was a long broad flight of marble steps. When she had descended these, she found herself in a broad lofty hall. For this world was subterranean. It lay underneath the foundations of the other world. On it was raised the Palace of Ethel's Queen; and, indeed of all other palaces worth the name. The Hall was full of statues and it was lighted by lamps held in

the hands of these statues; or I should rather say illuminated, because there was a festive splendor about the light, as if it were an illumination in honor of some perpetual, stately holiday. Around these statues were grouped piles of armor, implements of toil, models of cities, paintings of landscapes; and on the pedestal of each, in high relief, was sculptured the story of their deeds. But save for the lamps in the hands of these stately, silent, human forms, not a glimmer of light would have penetrated the place. The scenes and actions were only revealed through the persons.

"But as Ethel became accustomed to the place, she perceived that this great hall was but a vestibule. On all sides were transparent doors like the one through which she had entered. From each streamed the same pale, still, silvery light, but when Ethel applied her key to the locks she found the same difficulty as with the first. Each gateway of the palace required a separate probation before it could be passed. She could see, indeed, through the transparent doors, but to enter one after another and make acquaintance with the stately forms enshrined within was a work of time. It was much, however, to stand thus in the vestibule and gaze into one noble hall after another, and yet beyond again, through further transparent portals, on through avenues of stately marble forms and silvery lamps, as far as her eye could reach. Each hall had its especial destination. The generations who had lived together on earth were gathered together in one chamber of this palace. Kings and queens sat

there enthroned with their stony diadems; conquerors and martyrs with crowns strangely interchanged, the head of many a conqueror being wreathed with funeral cypress, while living amaranth and bay were intertwined around the patient brows of the sufferers for truth. Great orators were there, their faces eloquent with the last burning words which had parted from their mute lips; and holy men and women, bearing neither crowns nor lamps because a glory beamed from their high pure brows, which was better than a diadem, or any illumination from without."

"Was it all silent in this palace?" asked Winnie. "Could not any of these stately figures be questioned or answered?"

"None could be questioned or give any answer," said Maurice, "except by the language of the records of their deeds immutably sculptured and grouped around them. And all the palace would have been silent, save that in almost every hall stood some form beautiful beyond the rest, though seldom draped in any but the simple clothing of the people, crowned, not with dead diadems of stone, but with a living fragrant wreath of fresh leaves and flowers, from whose parted lips floated from time to time soft strains of song. And when those were heard, a strange magic life seemed to breathe through the mute forms around; the warrior's marble hand stirred to his sword, the brows of kings gathered a compelling majesty, the faces of saints beamed with the smile of joy and love. Four especially of these Ethel observed. Two had

the hands of these statues; or I should rather say illuminated, because there was a festive splendor about the light, as if it were an illumination in honor of some perpetual, stately holiday. Around these statues were grouped piles of armor, implements of toil, models of cities, paintings of landscapes; and on the pedestal of each, in high relief, was sculptured the story of their deeds. But save for the lamps in the hands of these stately, silent, human forms, not a glimmer of light would have penetrated the place. The scenes and actions were only revealed through the persons.

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solemn upturned faces, and sang of things above and below and afar off, unseen and eternal; and two had broad open brows, and countenances which seemed to gather all the dim struggling life around them to themselves, and give it back made clear and beautiful. Yet of each of these immortal pairs one was blind; and the voice of one, familiar and faltering as its tones seemed to Ethel, came from the very furthest recesses of the palace, mingled with the dull far-off murmur of the river of forgetfulness, which flows round all, on which the golden-thorned Olympians look down from their snowy peaks, and whose murmurs mingle with the low plash of the waters from the other side, with which the ancient Norns water the roots of the tree of life;—from the fountain where the white swans float, and near which the old serpents coil."

"That blind singer was Homer, I think," said Winnie, meditatively; "I wish I were as wise as Grace Leigh or Ethel that I might hear him too."

"So," continued Maurice, "Ethel listened and gazed; and she learned that but for the light borne by great and good men and women, all that great palace of glory and beauty would have been dark and impenetrable as a tomb; and but for the voices of the poets it would have been as silent. Wondering and reverent she passed once more by the stately statues of the vestibule and up the marble stairs; and when she re-entered her apartments it was dawn. She had come up from the great Palace of the Past."

"That was one of the Five Worlds," said Winnie. "And then?"

"Some evenings afterwards," said Maurice, "the mysterious veil dropped from another mirror. The two white-robed forms appeared to Ethel again, presented her with another key, vanished as before, and left Ethel standing before what seemed a temple of a thousand columns, through which she looked into the starry sky and across a beach of silvery sand to the sea. From inside this door she could see nothing very new or strange, only the same glorious friendly stars she had wondered at from infancy, the same waves she had played with, the same sands she had dug and heaped into mimic fortresses, or lakes and islands. It was not till after many trials that the lock of this door gave way. But when she was once through it she found herself in a world of wonders—all the more wonderful because every object was so familiar. A veil seemed to have dropped, not only from the mirror, but from her eyes. She found that what had seemed a temple was in fact but a portico to the great Temple beyond; and this temple was none other than the old familiar world. The blue arch of sky which had spanned the earth of her childhood expanded into an ocean of space, and the twinkling starry lamps were unveiled into worlds, suns of many worlds. One mild planet floated above her, fair and bright as the moon, with other silvery moons circling round it. From beneath the sea shone countless phosphorescent fires, and many voices sounded, not of breaking waves only, but of living

creatures, each with its separate history. Every pool among the rocks expanded into a world of life, peopled with tiny glancing fish and starry zoophytes, and branching ruby coralline. From the ledges of the cliffs came the murmurs of the sea-birds brooding over their nests—every nest a home, every feather of every nestling a wonder of delicate mechanism. And over, and through, and beneath all this hum and stir of life, Ethel heard the steady vibrations of the great mechanism of the world, the ebb and flow of tides, the revolving of suns, and moons, and stars, the ceaseless transformations of the elements of things; the grand march of the worlds around some mysterious unknown centre; the changeless tide of Law which is ever encountering the varying currents of Life. And as she gazed her heart sank before the infinity around her; she shrank to a point in the boundless universe; until once more looking up, she saw that deeper than Law and at the heart of Life, interpenetrating and inspiring all, flowed the great light-ocean of Love. And she made melody in her heart, and sang, 'No more a point in the infinite universe, but a child close to Thy boundless heart.' Then she turned back silently through the columned portico of the great temple reverent and wondering. For through the portico of Science, with its thousand pillars, she had entered into the temple of nature."

"I understand a little of it," said Winnie, slowly. "It makes me feel very little and ignorant, Maurice, yet I like it. Go on."

"The third discovery," he continued, "came to

Ethel in the morning. She had wakened early, while all was still gray in the morning twilight when from a mirror opposite her the veil dropped suddenly, and a glorious flush of dawn burst on her eyes. Behind rich purple draperies of cloud the face of the morning shone on Ethel, it seemed to her, with altogether a new beauty. She arose, and dressing quickly, stood with clasped hands and a face full of wondering joy before this new world. Dawn deepened into day as she looked, and everything in the chamber within sobered into common practical light to work by, but still that glorious flush of morning glowed on the world which spread before her outside that new window. She looked across a country rich as Paradise, with everything that was pleasant to the eye. Close at her feet lay a garden, where grew every variety of delicate and gorgeous flower, mingled with thickets of myrtle, oleander, and pomegranate, and winding spaces of soft turf; beyond stretched an undulating plain, broken by stately forests, and watered by a river which flowed from a range of snow-peaked mountains in the distance, and which brought down the crimson glory from their peaks in many lake-like reaches to the plain. But what arrested Ethel's gaze was a City with a Hundred Towers, which rose beside this river. Its walls flashed back the light in a thousand hues, as if they were translucent like precious stones; its roofs shone like gold, and delicate pinnacles and minarets sprang from them here and there like fretted ivory. While Ethel was still standing thinking, the two white-robed maidens appeared to

her once more, presented her with a golden key, and vanished. To Ethel's delight this door yielded more easily than the others, and the instant it was opened quite a flood of aromatic perfumes, and music dreamy and delicious as the perfumes, streamed in upon her. There was no lifeless silence in this new world. The music was from the songs of multitudes of birds hidden among the forests, from the flow of the countless streams which sparkled and danced towards the river, blended with far-off mystic harmonies of instruments and human voices from the City of a Hundred Towers. The perfumes floated from a sea of flowers and fragrant shrubs, blended with some fine aromatic scent, as if from costly woods kindled by human hands. Both sounds and scents drew Ethel's steps insensibly on towards the city. But when she reached it she found the city was one great palace. At the entrance she perceived a fountain, in which she bathed her hands and eyes. As she wandered through the halls everything she had seen in the subterranean palace, and in the temple by the boundless sea, as in the beautiful world around the city, seemed mirrored and glorified here. The forms of the old heroes seemed to breathe once more in these enchanted chambers: the stars shone with a new splendor through the golden air, which, while radiant as day was clear and transparent as night. And when she looked through those palace windows at the mountains, and woods, and waters of the world outside, it seemed to her as if she had scarcely seen them before, so wonderfully did fresh beauty beam back on

her from every natural thing. After a time she found that the two chief wonders of the palace were its magic windows, through which all the old world shone with a new glory; and its magic mirrors, which brought the beautiful things of the outer world, and of the subterranean palace, and of the temple by the sea into this City of Beauty—and which, at the touch of a certain magic wand (which was not in her hand, but waved for her by one who went with her as a guide), ceased to be mere mirrors, and became exquisite miniature worlds, with mimic reproductions of those old subterranean halls where the marble forms no longer sat mutely, with stony eyes, enthroned on their pedestals, but breathed, and moved, and looked, and spoke.

"And when Ethel left the palace and returned through the plains and gardens to her home, to her joy she saw that the glory thrown on the outside world did not fade away like a dream, but rested on everything still. Then she understood that the fountain had opened her eyes to a reality, not deluded her with a dream. And with a thankful heart she went about her daily work, and saw every common thing around her clothed with a new beauty. For she had been in the Palace of Art; and the work of true Art, as much as of true Science, is not to veil but to unveil."

"I am glad the door of that Third World was the easiest to unlock," said Winnie, "for I like it the best of all."

"It is the easiest world to enter as a spectator," he replied; "but the magic wand which opens its

wonders to others is the gift of but few, and the perseverance necessary to earn the skill to wield it is the possession of fewer still."

"It is more like a fairy tale than the rest were," said Winnie.

"Yes," he said, "and I forgot to tell you that as Ethel came back from the palace she caught glimpses of the white robes of nymphs among the stems of the forest trees, and in the green glades not far-off saw more than once the glancing of the feet of tiny, fairy folk feasting and dancing on the dewy turf, and mingling their low, silvery laughter with the deeper music of the place."

"I do not expect to like either of the two other worlds as much as that," said Winnie, "but tell me about them."

"Both of these," Maurice replied, "had been open to Ethel long before the date when this story began. The fourth mirror-window was a door which stood open all day long, not only for Ethel to go out, but for other people, especially the children, to come in. This door opened on the outside of the Queen's Palace, on the slopes which led to the great city of the people, and through it came the sound of human voices, not always joyous; echoes of marriage-bells and of the slow tolling which beats time to the slow tread of mourners; voices of weeping, and of toil, and of eager contention; the sharp tones of those who inflicted wrong, and the bitter cry of those who suffered wrong; the long low wail of disappointed hope; the shriek of fear; mingled with happy, innocent

laughter, and songs of thanksgiving, and lullabies over cradles. That was no door at which Ethel could stand and gaze; it was a door for going out to help, and coming in for shelter and kindness. For no one could ever bear to listen long at that gate unless they make it a gate of mercy. Any who stand listening there in listless dreaming will soon weary; and the door will close, and they will turn to the other worlds to dream there. And then the Expanding Palace will become once more the Contracting Chamber."

"But," said Winnie, musing, "it seems to me if once that Door is opened one would have no time for any of the rest, scarcely to look through them, much less go in. There must be so endlessly much to do in that city."

"Many find it so," said Maurice, smiling. "Very few indeed do find time to enter more than one or two of these worlds, or at all events to step beyond the threshold. But it is good to know that they are there, and to look through the windows into them, even if it be only with a passing glance. It clears the eyes and strengthens the hands for much that has to be done in the city below, in the actual world of human life."

"But there is the Fifth World," said Winnie.

"That was the one which was opened to Ethel first of all," said Maurice. "There was an innermost chamber into which no one could enter but herself; and at the end of that chamber was a transparent door, covered with heavy folds of purple drapery which none but an unseen hand

could lift. But that hand was always ready at her call. What she saw when that curtain was withdrawn was better than all the glories of the Four Worlds beside. From it rose a flight of stairs white as snow, and glistening as light. And up and down these steps glorious happy beings came and went to an open gate at the top—a wide, open gateway in the crystal walls of the Golden City. Everything fair she had seen in the other worlds was here, not in form or image, but in glorious reality. The stately forms of the great Past were there, no longer stony silent statues, but living and perfected. She caught glimpses of them now and then moving through golden streets, encouraging her to come. Below the City, stretched far-off spaces of worlds unveiled as they had never been in the Temple by the Sea. Over all streamed a glory warm and life-giving, such as had never shone on the Palace of Art. The shadows of leaves, and the gleam of golden fruits mingled with the glories within that gate, and breathed their perfume even to her as she knelt outside and gazed. And the City was as full of human life as the city below the Queen's Palace, the voices that sounded thence were tender with past tears, though never broken more by sorrow or pain. And from within the gate, now and then, she thought one and another glorious face was turned to her with welcoming looks, and the lips parted as soft murmurs of speech came down to her; and though she could not hear the words, she knew they were encouraging her to come."

"But she could not go," said Winnie, her eye lashes drooping far over her cheek.

"No, this door was not one for going in and out at," said Maurice in a low voice. "Those that once entered in came back through it no more. And the key was never given to any hand but one."

"I suppose they never wished to come back," said Winnie very softly, for tears were gathering under the drooping lids.

"Never, that I heard," replied Maurice. "All the broken glories of all the other worlds were gathered together in this one; and made living in the loving Presence which was the Life of all. And thus it was made up richly there to those who had given up so much of their strength and time below to the world of human need and sorrow that they had left themselves little for the worlds of the Past, or of Science, or of Art."

Then Winnie rose, and creeping to Maurice's side, murmured, "I think I know in whose hand the Key of that World is kept!"

A silence of some minutes followed, which was broken by the announcement that a poor little girl was wanting to see Miss Winifred. In an instant Winnie was recalled into the actual world. She knew quite well who it was, and suddenly leaving Maurice she flew upstairs to collect the presents she had been buying or making for little Fan. She soon came down with her hands and arms full with a warm frock (which she considered hardly a present at all, being only a *necessary* thing); a

beautiful Bible for Dan; and what Winnie thought would enchant Fan, a doll with clothes to take off and on, and a doll's bed to correspond.

She came into the servants' hall where little Fan was, laid the gifts on the table, and then was seized with a fit of shyness; for Fan had begun to learn manners, and stood courtesying in an indiscriminate way which perplexed Winnie very much what to do next.

At length she said:

"Those are for you, little Fan, the frock and the doll; and the book is for Dan."

Fan's eyes sparkled at this last announcement, and without venturing to touch the treasure she said:

"Brother Dan can read out of that, he gets on wonderful with his learning, the doctor says, Dan do."

The frock also was received with unfeigned delight, as soon as Fan took in the idea she was to wear it. But she seemed still to give no attention to the doll.

"Don't you like this, Fan?" said Winnie at length, rather disappointed; "I made its clothes myself—at least Rosalie and I did; and they take on and off, and the bed has a real bolster, and pillows, and a mattress."

Still Fan looked very grave, and seemed rather awed than delighted.

At last she said when Winnie laid it in her arms:

"It won't hurt it not to undress it, will it? Dan wouldn't like it to be hurt if you gave it to me."

"What do you mean?" asked Winnie quite perplexed. "It is a plaything, little Fan; you are to play with it."

"But I don't know how," said little Fan coloring. "I hadn't never time to play."

"You don't know how to play, little Fan?" exclaimed Winnie, at first seriously inspecting Fan, in the fear she was not right in her mind.

"I'd always got to mind aunt's baby," said Fan apologetically. "Dan played at marbles between whiles with the boys in the court, but there weren't nowhere for me to play, and there weren't no time."

Slowly the thought of that motherless, joyless childhood rose before Winnie; and as she looked at the thin, pale, cold little face, she said, with quivering lips:

"Oh, little Fan, not to know how to play! How very unhappy you must have been! how unkind they must have been!"

"It weren't always so bad," said Fan, cheerily, "there was always brother Dan. Aunt weren't always cross. She did hit about sometimes, but sometimes she giv'd me a ha'penny for sweets; and the lady who kept the greengrocer's shop gave me an orange many times for me and Dan. And aunt's baby was good sometimes, and didn't cry for an hour together; and sometimes he'd crow quite pretty. Some of the girls in our court had shuttlecocks; but the big boys hit about them dreadful sometimes when the little ones came in their way, and I felt safer like with baby on the

door-step. And then," she concluded—ended as she had begun with the joy of her life—"there was always Dan!"

Winnie's heart began to revive, and a dim hope to creep in, as she listened to little Fan's patient and cheery view of things, that after all God might have kept some little bit of joy for every little child, and did perhaps provide all those who took things patiently with something that answered both for play and study. A baby that could crow and didn't always cry had certainly some claims against a doll. And then the consolatory thought further occurred to her:

"Then, little Fan, you had no French lessons?"

Fan's views on this subject, however, entirely varied from Winnie's. Her face lighted up, and she said triumphantly:

"But I am to have lessons though! There's such good news come. When Dan gets well he's to be the baker's boy. And the lady who keeps the greengrocer's shop says I may mind her baby. And I am to go to school for an hour or two every day besides till I can read like Dan. And I'm to sweep out Miss Grace's room. And ain't Miss Grace's room beautiful?"

As the vision of the tiny figure wielding a baby, or a broom, rose before Winnie, she began to feel that a doll and a doll's bed were altogether too childish gifts for a young woman of such pretensions; and when she proposed giving her something else instead, Fan was certainly relieved at being delivered from the charge of a young

lady of such very high toilette requirements as the doll.

"But who is Miss Grace, little Fan?" Winnie asked, when the question of the doll was settled—her curiosity being highly excited by the resemblance of the name to that of Maurice's friend, and her friend that was to be.

"It's Miss Grace the parson's daughter, who lives over the shop," said Fan.

"Over the greengrocer's shop! It's the very same," concluded Winnie, decisively. "What is she like, little Fan?"

Fan retreated into herself, silenced at this call on her descriptive powers. At last she looked up, and said:

"She speaks soft, and kind like you, but graver like. And she do sing, Miss Grace do. She come once to Dan's bedside and sang him a hymn; and he said it must be like they sang in heaven. And she sews," continued Fan. "The lady in the greengrocer's shop says she sews beautiful, and she says she'll teach me—Miss Grace will—and I'm to make Dan's shirts." And Fan's little thin face quite beamed at the thought of the happiness before her.

Winnie cast one lingering look of disappointment on the doll she had spent so many happy hours in dressing for little Fan; but she took it away and soon returned with a fairy rose-bush in a flower-pot, which was an especial treasure of her own, and told Fan that was for her and Dan.

For a minute the child stood speechless; and

then tears came into her eyes, and she murmured, in a broken voice:

"Dan'll see them growing! Brother Dan'll see 'em grow!"

Winnie returned with a very happy but a very thoughtful face to Maurice. He was still alone, writing letters; and going up to him, she said in a low trembling voice, her face crimson with eagerness:

"Oh, Maurice, can it be that the door into the city below the palace has opened for me, even for me—the door at which you go in and out; the best door of all, but one? Can it be, Maurice? And if it is, what can I do that it may never be closed again?"

"Going out and welcoming others in through it is the sure way to keep it open," said Maurice. "It is always either narrower and narrower with us, or wider and wider, day by day, for ever and ever."

"And when we get through that last door," said Winnie, softly, "into that last world which has all the best of all the worlds in it!"

"Then," said Maurice, "I think we shall find all around us and all within us grow so high, and broad, and deep, that the best of us will feel as if we had been living in the narrow chamber all our lives, and had only now first entered on the threshold of the wide world of God."

"Then that last step," said Winnie, "will be only a first step after all."

Chapter IV.

MAURICE'S story was finished, little Fan's visit was over, and yet Winifred's day had scarcely begun, when Maurice announced his intention of taking her an expedition into London. Mrs. O'Brien offered the carriage, and Rosalie was fully persuaded of the necessity of her own attendance; but both these honors were respectfully declined, and Winifred was intrusted to the sole guardianship of her brother.

She deemed it a point of honor not to inquire into Maurice's intentions; until, after walking together for half an hour, curiosity overcame discretion, and she said:

"If it is not against your plan, Maurice, I should like to know where we are going? I do not like surprises, Maurice, if you please; because it is always so difficult to be as surprised as the people expect, when you have been expecting you do not know what; and I think it is nicer to know beforehand."

"Well," said Maurice, "I am looking for a cab;

and we are going first to take ices and luncheon at a confectioner's, and then to the British Museum, and afterwards to see little Grace Leigh."

It must be confessed that Winnie's spirits did not rise at the prospect of the British Museum, which she had been in the habit of irreverently considering rather as a kind of national lumber-room, or entrance hall leading nowhere. The great lofty halls, lined with statues and sarcophaguses, and stuffed animals, always reminded her of her Aunt Katharine Wyse's great hall at Combe Monachorum; and the rooms full of cases of stuffed birds, and all kinds of disconnected "bits of things," always recalled to her an old deserted room, also at Combe, full of dusty and forgotten "curiosities," collected by previous generations of the Wyse family, and put there by succeeding generations to be out of the way.

Accordingly, diplomatically waiving the unattractive part of the programme, she said:

"Luncheon with you at a confectioner's will be delightful Maurice, and so will little Grace Leigh; but do you think we might go in an omnibus instead of a cab? I have so often wished to see what the inside of an omnibus is like—it must be almost as nice as riding on an elephant."

This point conceded, the travelers arrived safely at the British Museum.

At the door they met a tall, thin, elderly clergyman, with a slightly stooping gait; a meek, monotonous voice, as if he had been more used to reading than speaking; and a kind of bewildered,

hesitating, short-sighted manner, as if he had all his life been looking for something, he did not exactly know what or where.

By his side, leaning on his arm, in a way that was half protective and half dependent, stood a little girl, who rose on tiptoe and whispered something to him as Maurice and Winnie appeared.

Winnie felt instinctively that this could be no other than little Grace Leigh; but intimate as during the last few hours she had grown with the thought of her friend-elect, the sight of her as an actual person dressed in actual every-day clothes seemed at first to throw Winnie back rather than to advance her in the acquaintanceship. She colored to her temples; she could not have explained to herself why, but it felt rather as if she had penetrated into Grace's room among her secret treasures, and had been turning them over with the freedom of an intimate friend, when suddenly Grace had appeared, and she remembered that they had never met.

If Grace had felt any shyness at first, it quite vanished when she preceived Winnie's embarrassment. She seemed only to think how to make Winnie feel at ease; and came up to her and took her hand, and began pointing things out to her, taking charge of her in a kind of self-possessed, motherly way, which was natural to her, blended with a gentle deference, arising from the conviction she had that every one she met knew more, and was wiser than herself. Meanwhile Mr. Leigh and Maurice pursued their course; and a shy-looking

schoolboy, with dark eyes, deeply veiled by long black lashes and shaggy hair that would droop over them, whom Winnie knew must be Harry, kept hovering about the party, paying spasmodic attention to sarcophaguses and mummies, from behind which he occasionally encountered Winnie with strange, investigating glances, as if she had been a curiosity just imported from Upper Egypt.

Like all double-minded people, between his interest in Winnie and the mummies, Harry was seldom clear where he was going, which was a cause of some solicitude to Grace.

She evidently felt from the first that the charge of both of her companions devolved on her: and although she never irritated her brother with any prohibitory "don'ts," more than once Winnie observed that she saved some curiosity, or Harry's head, from damage, by calling him to see some remarkable object just as a concussion was imminent.

Harry's blunders had nearly as much effect in calming Winnie's nerves as Grace's composure; and when Mr. Leigh and Maurice had finished their discussion over the Rosetta Stone, Maurice was satisfied to see Winnie walking hand in hand with Grace, and looking up from time to time in her face with the confidence of being taken care of, and led where it was best to go.

Gradually Harry subsided under the guardianship of his father and Maurice; and Grace's mind becoming relieved about her responsibilities, she was free to enjoy the things about her.

The great black marble Egyptian kings, with

their hands on their knees, and their placid faces, seemed quite old friends of hers.

"Should not you like to see them," she said, "in their own places, at the entrances of the great temples, sitting so calmly under the burning sun, and looking out over the burning sands, and the ruins, and the graves? Don't they look grave, and calm, and satisfied, as if they were saying to us, 'Why are you puzzled about things? It is all right. We have been watching for thousands of years, and *we know.*'"

Grace spoke softly, as if she were thinking rather than talking; and as Winnie looked up at the straight, white smooth forehead, and followed the sweet, thoughtful, happy eyes up to those calm ancient faces, she said:

"I do not think they would say so to you; for you don't look puzzled at all. You look as if you knew as much as they do."

Grace smiled a peculiar sudden smile of her own which seemed to leave a music in your heart, like a child's sudden, joyous laughter; and she said:

"I think we do know more than they did about some things; don't you?"

As her eyes met Winnie's, Winnie thought of the illuminated text, but she could not speak of it then; and they walked on in silence until they stood before the great Assyrian human-headed bulls, and Grace said:

"Only think that those great grave eyes may have looked down on the prophet Jonah! Can you not almost fancy them following him, reproaching

him, and saying, 'And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are six-score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand?' Father says that means the babies. Think of babies and little children playing about those old giants!"

Winnie, who had never formed any distinct idea about either the prophet Jonah or Nineveh, still less about Assyrian babies, was more impressed with Grace's learning than with the human-headed bulls. She began, however, to have a dim idea that these great halls might after all be a vestibule *leading somewhere*; and all at once she remembered the subterranean palace of the Past, but she only said to Grace:

"Do you know Egyptian and Assyrian, then, as well as Greek?"

She said this with a blush, and with some hesitation, because she was not at all clear what language people used to speak in Nineveh or in Ancient Egypt.

It was Grace's turn to blush; and she said:

"I do not know Greek—only a little, just to help Harry about his lessons."

"Do you come here often?" asked Winnie.

"Oh, no—very seldom. Father can so seldom take a holiday, and he does not like me to come alone. There are so many baptisms and funerals; and then there is the Union. But it is such a delight when we can. It is like spending a day with the kings and queens and great men and women of old times in their own homes."

But Grace's favorite rooms were the Greek rooms. There she seemed quite at home.

"Everything is so beautiful here," she said. "The other things seem old and strange; but these never look old or strange, any more than the flowers and leaves which must have grown around them. Father lets me stay and sketch here sometimes."

And she pointed out to Winnie some of the beautiful, delicate carvings of capital and column with such a genuine delight that Winnie said:

"You seem as much interested in them as if they had been made by some one you knew and loved dearly."

Then they went up stairs into the department of the shells; and here, to Winnie's surprise, as she was hurrying past what seemed to her mere collections of things with labels, as uninteresting as a bazaar when you had no money to buy anything, Grace stopped and said,

"Oh, don't hurry here! This is almost the best of all. It always feels like hearing the waves heaving and breaking, and tasting the salt sea air. Look at the shapes and the carving; and she pointed to the delicate branching spines of a Murex; the twist of the translucent Nautilus; and the exquisite curves of the alabaster-white Heart Clam, meeting each other like a heart. "See," she said, "they are more beautiful than the capitals of the Greek columns! And look at the color," she added, pointing to the delicate rose-colored lip of a great whelk-shell. It is as delicate as a moss-rose. And

yet they have been tossed about on the great waves, or have been lying, no one knows how long, far down in the dark at the bottom of the sea. And then," she concluded very softly, "they *were* carved by One we know."

Winnie clung close to Grace's hand. She felt quite sure she had found a friend; and she felt also a happy sense of her own littleness and ignorance, and of the breadth and height and depth of the world she lived in. And as they left the Museum, she caught Maurice's hand, and said:

"Oh, Maurice, I know quite well now why you chose to come here. And Grace has been in Three of the Five Worlds, I am sure, and knows them so well. And she is not at all proud. She says she knows scarcely anything; but *I* think she knows Egyptian and Nineveh as well as Greek. And I think she will help to open all the doors to me. And I like her so much, and the Museum. And I see the British Museum is not at all a dull place like the hall or lumber-room at Aunt Katharine's. And I'm so much obliged to you, Maurice," she concluded, apologizing to him for her disparaging thoughts, "for bringing me to the Museum. It was the very nicest thing you could have done."

"And ain't Miss Grace's room beautiful?"

Little Fan's words rang through Winnie's head as the narrow door by the side of the greengrocer's shop was opened to them, and they went up the old dark staircase, with low carved oak balustrades, into the curate's one sitting-room, a room

with three high narrow old-fashioned windows in rather deep recesses, festooned with massive brown draperies which the landlady had thought it a master stroke of policy to acquire at a sale of one of the many houses in that decaying neighborhood. These solemn curtains, weighty with their former grandeur, and the houses on the opposite side of the street, certainly threw rather a sombre shade over the room, which was contrasted, but scarcely relieved, by a very gorgeous carpet, with bunches of enormous flowers in yellow baskets purchased, on a subsequent occasion—the delight of the landlady's heart, but not of Grace's.

(How vividly Grace remembered the evening when after a day's holiday, the landlady welcomed her and her father at the door with a mysterious exultation beaming in her full goodnatured face, crimson with the day's exertion, and triumphantly ushered them into the room where that brilliant carpet and those impressive curtains were displayed of precisely the tones of color which went wrong with each other!

"There, Mr. Leigh!" the landlady said, interpreting in her favor Mr. Leigh's dismayed silence. "I knew you and Miss Grace would be taken aback like, but I did it on purpose. We've been toiling and moiling like black slaves, but I had set my heart you and Miss Grace should see I know'd what was fit for a gentleman. I didn't live in the first families in Whitechapel when I was a girl for nothing. Them curtains is real damask, you can't buy such nowadays at no price; and the carpet

was new last year, and the color'll stand like china."

"The color will stand, will it, Mrs. Treherne?" said Mr. Leigh, sorely puzzled between gratitude and honesty. "You think it'll never be a little less striking?"

"Bless you, no, Mr. Leigh—no fear, it's none of them common stamped things. The colors are as sure as the wear!"

"And it's sure to wear?" said Mr. Leigh, taking refuge in as inexpressive a tone as he could command.

"As long as you or me, Mr. Leigh," was the exulting reply; "and I hope that'll be saying a good deal."

"Thank you, Mrs. Treherne, thank you," he replied. "I am sure no one could do more to make us comfortable." For Mr. Leigh well knew that Mrs. Treherne combined a warm heart with what she herself called "a terrible hasty temper," of which she was wont to complain, as of an unmanageable animal she had to keep. Accordingly, he ventured on no expression of opinion, and Mrs. Treherne left the room in a state of radiant complacency.

"Never likely to fade, Grace, my dear!" said Mr. Leigh, when they were left alone with that perpetual discord of color. "It will be like living under that poor man who was always tuning his violin, and always tuning it wrong. Grace, my dear, what are we to do? I'm afraid it'll put me out so in my sermons."

"There's a great deal of dust here, father," said

Grace consolingly; "and Harry moves about a good deal, and wears things out, and I think we shall not always notice it so much. And," she concluded, struck with a bright idea, "perhaps Mrs. Treherne wouldn't be offended if one day we bought a piece of quiet drugget. We might say it would save the carpet."

Mr. Leigh was comforted, but Harry had to be sent to school, and the drugget had not yet been bought.)

Perhaps it was on account of this discord that it was not until the curtains were drawn and the candles lit that Winnie began to echo Fan's opinion as to the room.

Grace had contrived, by a little diplomacy, to banish from it sundry ornaments which Mrs. Treherne had placed there: three vases of gigantic wax flowers under glass shades, which had adorned the chimney-piece; and two striking portraits in oils, indiscriminately purchased at a sale; so that at length nothing remained which, in Mrs. Treherne's opinion, made the room look "fit for quality" but two mirrors, one over the fire, a low gilt one with gilt pillars and cornices; and opposite it a concave circular one in a black frame, which with its repeated reflections, diminishing to nothing, had occasioned Grace and Harry their first perplexities both in optics and metaphysics, they having never been able to decide whether those reflections went on forever, or ceased when they ceased to be visible. Besides these, the only ornaments of the room were—on the walls a head of a lady, with a rosy

little girl of five, and a round-faced brown-eyed baby, sketched in water colors; a stray copy of Raphael's Elymas the Sorcerer; one or two illuminated texts; and on the chimney-piece, a huge old silver watch, suspended from a little bronze stand; two plaster casts of Canova's Night and Morning; and two silhouettes of ancestors, old gentlemen with black faces and silvery bag wigs.

On one side of the fireplace stood a small table of inlaid wood, which had been one of Mrs. Leigh's few wedding presents; and upon it, a work-basket, neatly covered with an embroidered handkerchief. In the recess on the other side, above Mr. Leigh's writing table, were fixed a few bookshelves, where Harry's blue and crimson-backed prizes shone conspicuous among Mr. Leigh's classics and the few second-hand volumes of Patristic and Reformation divinity which made his theological library. On the top shelf was a line of faded "Gems" and "Wreaths" and "Affection's Offerings," dating from Mrs. Leigh's school days. On the old square piano, which also did duty as sideboard, stood a huge brass-bound desk, which had belonged to Grace's grandfather, and was Harry's one piece of entailed property.

To Mr. Leigh and Grace almost everything in the room was an illuminated text of some portion of their life-history; and even to Winnie's eye a kind of significance seemed to shine out of the worn and faded things, as if they were saying, "If you knew our language, you would see we are not mere Arabesques, but sacred Arabic inscriptions."

The tea was spread on the table when they arrived. Winnie had little idea what thought and pleasure the preparation of this little entertainment had given Grace, or what anxious solicitude it had cost her father, nor what a proud day it was to Mrs. Treherne to welcome Mr. Bertram, the rector of St. Alphege the Martyr's under her roof, and to see "Miss Grace among such as was fit to sit down with her mother's daughter, poor lamb."

All Grace's entreaties had been powerless to procure a white cloth to be spread on the table.

"Scores of hours I've spent on that table, Miss Grace," she said, "me and mother before me; and after all to hide it away as if it were a bit of kitchen deal, real Honduras mahogany that my father brought from the Americas, when it shines like a looking-glass! Never mind, Miss Grace, if it is scratched and spotted a little. I don't grudge elbow grease. But to hide it would be a sin."

She had also insisted on introducing her own best china, of a pattern extensive and brilliant enough to match the carpet. But beyond this, the little feast was all Grace's arrangement. The plate of flowers in the centre, filled with a mosaic of flowers and moss, from which sprang a vase where white stocks and a few scarlet geraniums rose among delicate drooping sprays of asparagus; the little French rolls and fresh eggs; the cake decorated with paper cut in the style of the Portuguese nuns; and the plate of fresh cresses and radishes.

Histories again in everything. Mr. Treherne had made an especial expedition to the market an hour

earlier than usual that morning, to surprise Miss Grace with the freshest cresses. Mrs. Anderson, the Scotch baker's wife opposite, had got the rolls baked in an especially dainty twist for the occasion; and Miss Lavinia Lovel, who kept a "Ladies' School" at the corner, had spent her spare moments for the last day or two in cutting the paper into those wonderful flowers and perforations. Such a rare thing was it for Mr. Leigh and Miss Grace to have visitors, and so many were there gathered around them to whom their little joys and sorrows were matters of hearty interest.

So that far below the level of Mr. O'Brien's ordinary table as little Grace's highest efforts at entertainment fell, to Winnie it was quite a festive board; she felt that the eggs and the radishes were holiday eggs and radishes, to be enjoyed with quite a different appreciation from the prosaic eggs and radishes which were laid in the poultry-yard, or grew in the kitchen garden at home.

It was a very joyous little feast. Winnie had never seen Maurice in such high spirits. Harry was in a state of most pleasurable excitement between his efforts not to laugh too uproariously at Maurice's sallies on him and Winnie, and his semi-civilized attempts at doing the host to Winnie by convulsively poking at her various articles of food. Little Grace sat serene and motherly behind the urn, always instinctively knowing what every one wanted. The only anxious member of the party was Mr. Leigh, who, while he practically leant on little Grace as he had on her mother, theoretically,

never believed she was more than six, and living as he did in constant nervous apprehension as to what Harry would do next, had naturally looked on the whole entertainment as a wild and daring enterprise. However, even Mr. Leigh became by degrees reassured as to the character of Grace's tea, and of her arrangements in general, and the contentment of his guests.

His apprehensions were nevertheless a little revived when Maurice ventured to address some inquiries to Grace about her Greek.

"Indeed, Mr. Bertram," he said, apologizing to Winnie, "you must not give your sister a wrong impression. I assure you my Grace is nothing of a bluestocking. Her mother had an aunt who knew Latin and Greek, and embraced the fatal doctrines of the French Revolution, and that made her family always dread learned ladies; although I did not quite see the connection. Grace can read and write and sew; and I think she has some talents for drawing and music. But beyond this she aspires to nothing. We are plain people, Miss Bertram, very plain, old-fashioned English people."

"Grace knows more Greek than I do, father," interposed Harry, bending up to his sister's defence.

"No difficult task, I fear, my boy," said Mr. Leigh, with a quiet, little smile.

"She reads a hundred lines of the Iliad in no time," retorted Harry. Thus actually brought face to face with facts, Mr. Leigh looked anxiously at Grace, who had no defence but—"Indeed, father,

I did not mean to—I could not help it, at least—at first; and then," she concluded, gathering courage, "I got to like it so much, it was impossible to help going on."

Maurice laughed rather a malicious little laugh at Mr. Leigh's discomfiture; but then he said in a consoling tone: "You remember Lady Jane Grey, Mr. Leigh, a thorough Englishwoman, and the most dutiful of daughters, and she was even guilty of Plato."

"True," said Mr. Leigh, with some hesitation; "and then Grace may forget!"

After this discussion, Grace and Winnie soon left the room for the delights of a *tête-à-tête*.

"Ah, Mr. Bertram," said Mr. Leigh, as he returned from closing the door on the little girls, "that was a race of giants and giants' works. Lady Jane Grey was a good woman, undoubtedly, although she was a scholar; but consider what men and women she had to measure herself with; and consider what cares she had to counterbalance her learning, and keep her from being one-sided and unfeminine."

"It seems to me that the cares at least are not banished from our times," said Mr. Bertram.

"Ah, well," sighed Mr. Leigh, "Grace has hers, poor child. And a sweeter, gentler, humbler child never lived. I should never have suspected she knew anything of Greek."

Meantime, Winnie had entered on the inmost shrine of her aspirations for that day of delights. She was alone with Grace in Grace's own room.

But in this new stage of friendship a new veil of shyness seemed to drop over her heart: the ten thousand questions she had planned to ask Grace died on her lips, and she would have sunk into silence, if Grace's tender, little loving ways had not broken the spell again, and set her tongue free, not, indeed as she had meant, to question Grace, but to pour out the story of her own life; so that in a short time, as they sat curled up hand in hand in the little bed together, Grace knew all about her parents in India, and her aunt and uncle, and the pretty home and the rose-garden, and her books, and various possessions, her lessons and pleasures, the places she had seen, the excursions she had made, and little Fan and Dan, and Rosalie and all;—all but the inmost things which still lay hid behind that inmost veil which hangs before the sanctuaries of all temples in which there is any sacred Presence at all to reveal.

At length she paused, and looking up suddenly at Grace, said:

"Now tell me all about what you do—your lessons, and your holidays, and everything."

Grace was so little accustomed to look on herself or her life from outside, or indeed as anything apart from those she loved, that at first she was as much at a loss for a reply as if she had been asked for a concise narrative of the most recent explorations of Central Africa.

At length she said:

"I went to school to the Miss Lovels, until they said I had learned their books through. There were

not very many. There were Pinnock's Goldsmith, Greece, and England, with the Catechisms, and Mangnall's Questions, and the French Grammar, and the Vocabulary, and the Recueil Choisi. But I am afraid the French is a little altered since the Miss Lovels learnt, because I once tried to show an old French sailor his way, and he thanked me, but said he did not understand English. But they taught me to illuminate, too, and to make flowers, and cut paper like the Portuguese nuns, and to embroider and to sew, and the First Arithmetic Book. And Mrs. Anderson, the baker's wife opposite, taught me to knit stockings. Then there are Harry's books, the Analecta—there is a beautiful poem in that about all the creatures drinking from one another; and helping one another; the sun drinking from the sea, and the sea from the earth, and the earth again from the sun. And then there are Cæsar's Commentaries and Cornelius Nepos, and father's Iliad and Odyssey, which are the best of all."

"Have you no books of your own, then?" asked Winnie with some hesitating delicacy.

"Oh, yes," said Grace; "all mamma's small books are mine. There are the Gems and the Forget-me-nots. But I don't care quite so much about them. But there are the poems by John Milton; and some of those are as beautiful as the Greek. And then there are the three odd volumes of Shakspeare. Mrs. Treherne said they were play books, and I ought not to read them; but when I asked father he smiled, and said, John Wesley advised people to read Shakspeare; which made all the dif-

ference, Mrs. Treherne said, for she is a Methodist. Miss Lavinia Lovel said one day, when I told her, that it was not quite fit for little girls; but Miss Betsy said that was nonsense, and I do enjoy it so much. It is all English history, but so different from Pinnock's Goldsmith. You get to know the kings and queens, and the great men and women, as well as Hector, and Andromache, and Achilles; and they are not one of them like the others—just like real people, only so great and beautiful."

"Those are three of the great poets in Maurice's subterranean palace," said Winnie; which led to a digression concerning Maurice, with a sketch of the two allegories.

After which Winnie resumed:

"I suppose you are too old for playthings; I am, very nearly."

After some ransacking of her memory, Grace said:

"I had a doll once. I remember it because of its end. I must have been very little, for I remember crying one day at finding Harry pouring out its body in a shower of bran from a wound in its arm. And we have part of a box of dominoes, with which I used to keep Harry quiet when father was writing his sermons. I never remember any other toys. Everything was a plaything to us when we wanted to play, and father was out. Under the piano was a lion's den, or a robber's castle, or the counter of a shop—the chairs were horses and carriages; the music-stool was a pulpit; a pocket-handkerchief tied up was a baby; and a

footstool on its back made a beautiful cradle. I often wonder," concluded Grace, " when I look at a toy-shop why people take such trouble to make toys. Harry and I could always make the whole room into a toy-shop whenever we fancied. And I suppose other children are just the same."

Winnie's thoughts recurred to the elaborate furniture of her own nursery—the gigantic baby-house, so passionately desired, so seldom used; the exquisitely dressed dolls; the musical carts; the railway trains that went round the table with the touch of a spring; she remembered how often she and her playfellows, after disputing the use of these wonderful machines, had turned from one and another in weariness; and she said, as if to herself:

" And then there was little Fan. It is nice to have things given you, but it does seem made up to people when they haven't got them. But then I couldn't have done without my bricks. I have such a beautiful box of pillars and arches. The worst of them is, that you have so often to build them up in the same way, one gets tired, and I think sometimes they would be better if they were all plain."

" We have a box of plain bricks," said Grace, " I forgot that. A ship's carpenter made them for us, whose wife father had visited when she was ill, and been a comfort to. Square bricks which you can build anything with—temples, and towers, and palaces. And Harry has a box of tools. Mr. Bertram gave them to him. Harry was always cutting or pulling things to pieces, till Mr. Bertram gave

him those tools, and the ship's carpenter some large chips of wood. Father said it was very dangerous. But Harry quite took to it, and seemed to enjoy making things as much as pulling them to pieces; which was a great relief to us all. And I remember Mr. Bertram said he thought a great deal of the mischief done in the world might be put an end to in the same way. He said the love of pulling to pieces was often only the love of putting together turned inside out. You have only to turn it round, and it is all right. And it did seem so with Harry.

"Now tell me about your holidays."

"There is one every week," said Grace. "Every Monday afternoon father takes me for a walk. He is always rather low on Saturdays, because of his sermon that is to come; but on Monday afternoon father often says, 'Well, Grace, I think I did my best yesterday. I am afraid it was very poor, my child; but we must leave the past things with God.' And then we have our walk."

"Where do you walk?" said Winnie, her imagination wandering drearily through the long ranges of crowded, dingy, narrow streets, through which they had passed.

"Oh," said Grace, "there are many ways. Some times we cross the river in a ferry boat, and then very soon you come to market-gardens here and there. And sometimes we go up by the docks, and I like to see the ships; and, besides, there is an old woman here who remembers when the docks were all green fields with cattle grazing on them; and

that is very pleasant to think of. And then there are the penny steamers, and the great river, and the bridges with the arches reflected on it, and the houses and ships making such pretty pictures underneath. And once we went to Margate, which made me care for it much more, because I heard the real sea-waves the old heroes heard, and because I know now where the river is going. And twice we have been to Greenwich. And the great hospital there is beautiful. It is like the pictures of Venice when the sun is shining. It was a palace once, and now it is better than a palace, I think, since so many poor old men are taken care of in it. And there are such trees! They make you think of the great beech tree by the gate of Troy, where the old princes sat talking softly, watching the heroes fight on the plain. And there are deer, with lovely, soft, large, kind eyes. And once we have been to the Zoological Gardens; and that is almost as good, you know, as going to India, and Africa, and all the countries where they used to live. And four times to the British Museum; and that is like spending a day with the Pharaohs and the Assyrian kings, or with Homer himself."

"Things seem to make you very happy," said Winnie candidly. "It is very strange. I always thought the Zoological Gardens very uninteresting, except the monkeys, and the creatures who would eat biscuits. And I always thought the British Museum as dull as a lesson in French history, until to-day."

Grace looked rather perplexed.

"But then the great pleasure, you know," she said in explanation, "was having father, and having to cheer him up and make him happy. Because father," she added, in a low voice, "is low sometimes. He has had so many things to trouble him."

"Perhaps that is the difference," said Winnie: "every one is always trying, on my holidays, to make me happy, and it does seem easier the other way. It was the same with little Fan. And then," she continued, meditatively repeating over in her mind the endless variety of treats, and fêtes, and amusements provided for her, "perhaps you do like your pleasures better because they don't come so often."

"But," said Grace, to whom this view of "pleasures" as something got up expressly for the sake of being pleasures was quite new and incomprehensible, "nearly everything is pleasant, I think. Except," she added, with the almost nervous dread of exaggeration she inherited from her Father, "except when father has headaches with being anxious about his sermons; and when Harry gets impositions; and when we have to pay our New Year's visit to Cousin Felix Hunter, although they mean to make that pleasant, to us no doubt—only Cousin Felix seems to think we ought to have got on better, and that makes Father low."

"How do you mean that everything is pleasant?" said Winnie.

"It is pleasant to wake in the morning and think how much one has to do for people; and to think how sure God is to be near and help us to do it;

and then," she added softly, "to ask him. And it is pleasant to mend father's things, and make them nice, and think how he will wonder at their lasting so long, and how little he knows how it is. And it is pleasant just to learn a little bit more every day, and feel getting on. And it is pleasant to help the Miss Lovels with their scholars when I can, and save Miss Lavinia's voice, and Miss Betsy's eyes. And it is pleasant to help Harry. And it is pleasant to contrive how to make the cold meat that lasts too long seem like new to father, by little changes. And it is pleasant to make things pleasanter in all kinds of ways for father and Harry, by giving up little things which they never know I give up (because if they knew they might think I cared, and not let me, and I don't care in the least), and which they enjoy having; that is one of the greatest pleasures. And then it is pleasant that Mr. Treherne is a greengrocer and not a baker, because there are never any hot uncomfortable smells; and the cabbages, and the red bunches of carrots, and the baskets of turnips, are so nice to look at; and the parsley is just as beautiful to sketch as the acanthus on the Corinthian columns; and Mr. Treherne is so kind in giving me moss and asparagus tops; and it is so pleasant to hear Mr. Treherne talk about the sea, and the fishermen, and the mines in Devonshire and Cornwall. And it is pleasant that Mrs. Anderson, when she is teaching me knitting, has such wild strange stories about her father's old home in the Highlands. People who have been in places are so much nicer than books of travel,

or than any books, I think, except one or two. And then," she continued, taking Winnie to the window, "it is so pleasant that there is a corner of the churchyard in sight. If you squeeze your face a very little against the glass you can see a tree. And it is delightful to watch it in spring getting more beautiful every day."

Winnie had some difficulty in taking in the catalogue of Grace's pleasures. So she turned the conversation and said:

"But what are your Sunday books?"

Grace paused a little to consider, and then she said:

"I have none."

"Not one Sunday book!" exclaimed Winnie, fixing her questioning eyes on Grace, in some doubt whether to attribute such destitution to a confusion in Grace's ideas about Sunday, or to a poverty which seemed inconceivable—"Not one?"

"No, I think not," replied Grace, not at all despondingly, yet in a tone of apology, "unless it is Paradise Lost. I do not think Shakspeare is quite one, nor Homer, although it often helps me on Sundays, and every day, to think of them. There are father's books for his sermons, but I never thought of reading them. They look so much the same all the way through, and there are so few proper names; and then they seem all about things, not about people, like the Bible. Of course there is the Bible," she concluded reverently; "but that is not a Sunday book, is it? The Bible is for Sundays, and every day, and always."

strange!" said Winnie. "I have ay books. Do let me give you some s not worth calling a present," she dly, "for except two or three I never much about them. They are like Mr. Leigh's books for the sermons—round and round, always the same. But I always thought that was because of my not being good. And you *are* good," concluded Winnie, in the delicious confidence of her first living hero-worship, "so you might like them. And at all events they might be better than nothing. What can you do with yourself on Sundays without the garden and without books?"

It was Grace's turn to be astonished.

"Thank you very much," she said, "but what could I do with more books on Sundays? There is never half enough time. And all the time there is passes so quickly. I always get up a little earlier because father likes breakfast early, and because it *is* Sunday; and there is such a fresh happy feeling about it always. Then there are the sermons."

"You like sermons," said Winnie, despondingly.

"I think all sermons are nice," replied Grace, "at least there is always something nice in them. And the text always." Grace's criticism being of that happy kind which darts on a pearl as eagerly as some critics on a flaw. "Then there is the Sunday school, and it is such a delight to meet the little children."

"You have a class at the Sunday-school?" said Winnie, more awed by this dignity than by any of her other discoveries. "You really teach little chil-

dren? What can you find to say? It must be like making a sermon."

"They are only the little ones, and I know them all so well," said Grace. "It is only like talking. And they like to tell me things. And," she concluded, her quiet face kindling as she spoke, "I think it is the happiest hour in all the week, that and one besides. For I tell them about Jesus from the Gospels. And sometimes it seems as if the Gospels were written just on purpose for little children. There is so much they care to listen to there. I think there are no stories half so beautiful; if they were only stories. Think of all the people HE made happy, and how well we seem to know them all;—the poor blind men the people tried to keep quiet, but Jesus *would* listen; the poor woman with the sick daughter they wanted Him to send away, but Jesus *would* help her; the little children they tried to keep back, but He would have them close in his arms, on his bosom, his hand on their heads, resting there; the woman with the box of precious ointment they complained of, but He spoke such kind words to! And then the things He said, and the places where He said them—the seashores, and the gardens, and the sides of the beautiful hills, and the tops of the mountains, and walking through the corn-fields; and even the streets. He walked through the streets, I am always so glad of that. And then the things He noticed—the lilies, the sparrows, and the two mites. One does seem to know what many of the old heroes and kings would have looked on grand occasions. But with Jesus,"

she said very softly, "you seem to know such beautiful *little* things as well as the great ones—you seem to feel what his very touch was on the heads of the little children, and the blind eyes, and the poor leper; and what his look was, and how he must have said the things. And then, you know, they are not made-up stories, but truer than the truest history in the world. And not like the histories about people that are dead and gone. For Jesus," she concluded, "you know, is living; and He never goes away, and never will. And it is so delightful to talk to the poor little children about him. For some of them have such poor sad homes, and if you can only make them feel Jesus is with them there—not at church or at school only, but at home!"

"I should like to be one of your Sunday class," said Winnie, putting her arms round Grace and nestling her head on her shoulder. "But what is your other happiest hour?"

Grace colored a little and paused, and then she said:

"I never spoke of it to any one. But it is when the evening service is over in the church, and the last footstep has passed out of hearing, and the last note of the organ has died away, and yet the music seems still there, and the sexton is putting out the lights one by one, so that the church gets almost dark, and the sky looks down, dark blue, through the top of the windows above the galleries. Father has always something to do in the vestry, and Harry goes round helping to put out the lights, and

then goes to join Father. And our pew is square, just under the reading-desk; and in the corner no one sees me. Then it is so solemn in the empty church, and I am so tired, and so happy; and God seems so near; and I think of my school children, how they are asleep in their homes, and God is near them too, and I ask him to bless them; and I think of mother, how she has gone home, and how near she is to God, and that she does not look up to heaven through a little strip of a church window, but is there, not in darkness, but in the light, at church and at home at once. And I wonder how it will feel when the last day's work is done, and I shall be tired and yet happy, as she looked when I saw her last, and she smiled on me; and I long to see her smile again and to hear her say, 'Grace, you have taken good care of your Father and Harry, and now we will rest together.' And then I think of the welcome Jesus will give, and what it must be to see Him smile and look really pleased, and to hear Him say 'Well done.' Because you know," she said, "we are not told He ever did smile on earth, and they did so much to grieve Him, so little to please Him. And yet," she concluded, "I do think He is more ready to be pleased with us than any one; such little things please Him, if we really try. And then I give up thinking, and look up to Him."

There was a silence, and then Winnie came out with her long-delayed question:

"How did you know? What made you choose that text and illuminate it for me?"

"Mr. Bertram had been so kind in helping Harry," said Grace, "and he had so often talked to us about you."

"But *that text*—how could you know how I cared for it, or that mamma had written it in my Bible?"

"I only know how I cared for it and mother," replied Grace; and opening a little thick old Bible bound in faded red morocco she showed Winnie written on the first page, first in a clerical hand, "Grace Ratcliffe from H. L.;" and then in a trembling, delicate hand below, "Grace Leigh, from her mother;" and below, the text: "*We love Him because He first loved us.*"

"Does it not seem as if God meant we should love each other?" said Winnie. "Well, Grace, will you love me and be my own friend?"

"It does seem as if God means us to love each other," said Grace. "I like to think He *means*, better than that He meant. Because you know He has not only planned something for us long ago and gone away—He is with us now. And I think we *are* friends," she concluded, "and I am sure I do love you."

And so the children returned to the sitting-room, and Grace's portfolio was brought out, with which Winnie was a little disappointed; for except some half-finished illuminations and some sketches in chalk of Greek sculpture, it contained chiefly water-color drawings of parsley-leaves and mosses and even of cabbage-leaves and baskets of turnips, which Winnie's ideas of Grace's powers had been

soaring too high altogether to appreciate. There was one little sketch, however, of a harebell throwing the shadow of its delicate stem over a tuft of ivory-white woodrooffe and bright green turf which seemed to Winnie, she could not tell why, like one of Anderson's fairy tales, which she thought so pleasant because she was always half-guessing their meaning, and never quite. And this Grace insisted on her taking home as a present.

"Maurice," said Winnie, after a long silence, as they were driving home together, "how did you first find out Grace Leigh?"

"About two years since," he said, "I was taking the duty for a few weeks, as curate, in the next parish to Mr. Leigh. I had known him before, and had often met him at meetings, but I had never been to his house, until, one evening in January, when it had been snowing all day, and the snow had frozen so that the horses were falling in the slippery streets, I heard a knock at my door, and my landlady introduced 'Miss Leigh.'

"I looked up, expecting to see some strange lady on business, probably an energetic elderly district visitor for a subscription. But instead, I saw before me a little person, apparently not more than ten or eleven years old, in a large shawl tied around and across her, as if she had been a parcel. On her head was a tiny straw bonnet, looking as if it had been meant for a younger child, which half fell off her head, and underneath it looked out that grave, sweet little face, more shaded by its own, long fair

curls than by her bonnet. In that quaint dress, with her bright hair all flaked with snow, she looked like a Christmas fairy, who, having some benevolent reason for paying a visit to our world, had disguised herself in the first stray garments she could lay her hands on. Yet the little face was human enough, with its earnest, pleading look, trembling, too, as she was with cold. I begged her to warm herself at the fire; but she said, in a soft, childish voice, without any pause (as if she had wound herself up for a great effort and would break down altogether if she hesitated a moment): "Please, Mr. Bertram, I cannot stay, Father is very ill in bed, and he will want me, he does not know I came out, but he spoke of you, and the other day you were kind to our little Harry when a big boy had knocked him down in the street and taken away his marbles, and I thought you would help us now, for Mrs. Treherne says it would be death to Father to go out and preach to-morrow, and I was afraid the church would stop, or Father would go and never get better, and I did not know what else to do, so please, Mr. Bertram, you will try and come and help Father, won't you, that the church may not stop." As I listened to her, the whole gravity of the situation gradually unfolded itself. This little creature was actually a little Atlas, bearing on her small shoulders the whole ecclesiastical weight of the parish. Taking Mrs. Treherne's prognostications literally, she saw before her only two awful alternatives—her father going out and killing himself; or the whole congregation sitting, expectant, before

the empty reading-desk. And without hesitation she had thrown her little person into the chasm. So I said, 'Don't be afraid, Miss Leigh. Mr. Leigh need not attempt to go out, and the church shall not stop; I will arrange it all.' The weight of responsibility glided off from the little anxious face at once. She said, 'I am not Miss Leigh, I am only little Grace.' Then I told her I would go back with her to her father at once. For, with the responsibility, had melted away the courage: tears were gathering in her eyes, and her lips quivered—not with cold. She let me take her dear little cold hand in mine, and lead her back through the slippery streets to Mrs. Treherne's shop, entirely trusting the rest of the negotiations to me. Mr. Leigh's illness was more than half on the nerves. The relief from the dread of having to undertake the service went some way towards strengthening him to do it. I read the morning-prayers and by the afternoon he was well enough to read the service, before I preached. But since then little Grace and I have always been friends."

Winnie relapsed for some time into meditation, and then she said, "What a delightful long day this is to think of! I have found out about the Five Worlds, and about the British Museum leading into them; and I have found out a friend—oh, such a friend, Maurice! I think Grace *is* Ethel. I think she can never have known for a moment what it is to be in the contracting chamber. I think she has one of the magic wands in the Palace of Art. And she loves me, Maurice; I do feel sure she does: and

she is going to help me. Only, Maurice," she continued, "I do think it is easier to be good if you are poor, at least rather poor, than if you are rich. It takes Uncle and Aunt O'Brien so much trouble to make lessons, and then to make amusements for me. And to Grace, and even partly to little Fan, the lessons and the pleasures seem to *come* without any one taking any trouble about it, all mixed up together; and that does seem nicer on the whole. Do you think God settles it in that way, and that is why He makes so many people poor, and so few people rich?"

"I do think riches are a very poor providence, when they are put instead of God's providence Winnie," he said; "but if you ask and watch and really wish it, you will find God will take your lessons and your pleasures under His care as much as little Fan's or Grace Leigh's."

Rosalie was much perplexed at Winne's recital of her birthday delights.

"You have taken off all the first freshness of your beautiful dress among the lowest of the people in an omnibus," she said; "you have had tea in the most wretched faubourg over the shop of a seller of turnips; and you might have driven with madame like a princess through the parks, and been enthroned in the evening in your robe de fête under a canopy of myrtles, with hair crowned with roses like a fairy queen, receiving the homage of the young ladies and gentlemen your companions, and afterwards a dance, ravishing as the opera. But,"

concluded mademoiselle in the grand style, rushing to rash generalizations, "your nation is a sphynx, an enigma. To you amusement is a serious work, and serious work is a pastime. But what does it matter? Each must fulfill his destiny!"

Chapter V.

IT is time to give a more succinct narrative of Grace Leigh's history; to fill up the gaps between the glimpses she had unconsciously given Winifred into her life and the world she lived in.

When about fifteen years ago Mr. Leigh had brought his bride a governess and an orphan to Mrs. Treherne's lodgings, it was a great change to her from the country town where the rest of her life had been spent, and where she knew the faces and something of the history of almost every one she met. At first the more prosperous parishioners had called upon them; and they might have lived in a round of small entertainments. The incumbents had long since fled to fairer regions, and a curate under the circumstances was not to be despised. Among these new acquaintances, there were more than one kind-hearted family who perplexed themselves how to increase the comforts so evidently needed by the delicate-looking wife, without

wounding the feelings of Mr. Leigh. But Mrs. Leigh's health had gradually grown feebler and feebler. She pined for air, and open spaces of fields and sky, and could not walk far enough to reach them. So that visiting proved a toil, (to say nothing of the expense involved in the simplest attempts to dress as her husband liked), and her life had become more and more secluded. Moreover, the one little maid, who was all they could afford, was by no means to be trusted with the sole responsibility of one baby; much less of the four babies who co-existed, when Grace was four years old and Harry was just born.

And then the two intermediate babies died. A great relief to every one who looked at the matter from a statistical point of view. But to poor Mrs. Leigh they were her darling little baby Alice and her prattling Georgie, whose loss cost her nights of weeping, and agonies of yearning, when she woke from her brief morning sleep, for one more tender clinging of the soft arms and pressure of the warm cheek to hers. She had "a foolish country fancy" too, she said, to look now and then at their little graves. And she was never strong enough to go to the cemetery amidst the far-off fields, which had been assigned to the parish instead of the dark damp churchyard closed some years before by the laws against intramural interment. So that, although she tried very hard to get strong, the struggle against want of fresh air, and sorrow and care proved altogether too much for her; and when Grace was nine and Harry five,

that happened which made Gracie a little woman before her time.

One morning Mrs. Leigh told Grace to bring her the red morocco Bible; and she wrote the child's name in it, with the text Winnie had seen, and said: "Read it every morning and every evening, Gracie, for mother's sake, and for Jesus' sake." And three evenings afterwards, when she wished Grace good-night, she said, in a very feeble little whisper, "Take care of father, and of little Harry, Gracie, darling, and God will take care of you." And then she gave her a long, long kiss, and that was the last mother's kiss little Grace ever had.

Grace could not remember any details of what happened next. Nothing seemed to happen for many days. It seemed like a long week, with no distinction of evenings or mornings, days or nights, all dark and cold alike; and at the end, the light let in again as if on desolate empty rooms, although everything was unchanged in them, even to the work-basket with the unfinished frill in it for Harry's best frock. And her father sobbing like a child, with his head hidden on his hands; and Harry, pleased at the blinds drawn up, chirruping to the horses in the streets; and little Grace holding him on her knee, and trying to make him happy in a quiet way till bed-time; and then putting him to bed herself, and talking to him, and having a little struggle to make him say his "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild," to her instead of to his mother, and soothing him as well as she could until he fell asleep; and then coming down and venturing to

nestle in close to her father, until he drew his arm round her, and felt for the first time that his grief was not utterly unfathomable, that in the terrible void there were still some precious treasures of love left.

That was how Grace's history began. Before that terrible week all the days were uncounted days of Eden; days of being loved, and cared for, and helped, and cherished; a mother's heart between her and the world; a mother's love and care making visible to her the love and care of God.

But after that all was changed; the Eden faded, and the tender self-denying woman's life, which is such a well-trodden way to the better Eden, began.

"For mother's sake, and for Jesus' sake; and take care of father, and little Harry, and God will take care of you," was the illuminated text running through all her days.

As the months passed on, little Grace's life became a far brighter one than her mother's could ever have been. She had no contracted memories of sweet, quiet country lanes and fields, to make the streets seem dingier and noisier. The very holiday excursions, the half-country places which would have recalled the real country painfully to her mother, were a rapture to little Grace. The quick sense of beauty which was frequently a torture to the negative artist-nature of Mr. Leigh, was a constant source of joy to the positive artist-nature of his little daughter, with her happy temper, and her quiet healthy nerves.

The mere light and shade of the outline of the

houses on a sunny day gave her pleasure; the fresh vegetables and baskets of fruits in the greengrocer's shop were a feast of color to her; and the blooming of the market-gardens on the other side of the river, or even the budding of the leaves in the churchyard, brought all the spring into her heart.

Not that little Grace had no dark days. No one who has days worth calling bright can be without them.

Saturdays were very often dark days, because Mr. Leigh then finished his sermon for Sunday afternoon. And although there were seldom more than twenty people, chiefly old women and servant-girls, to hear it, Mr. Leigh had a rigid ideal of his own, quite independent of audience or effect, which he never could satisfy.

Then there were very anxious hours as the time went on and Harry went to school, when he did not reappear at the hour when he was due, and at last came back with downcast face, very much aggrieved with the master, or the lesson, or things in general, which had caused him to have an imposition and to be kept in. For Harry was one of the many sufferers by the confusion of tongues, or rather, as Mrs. Treherne viewed the case, by the interference with Providence of the philologists who tried to do away with its effects.

"The people were scattered on the face of the earth," she would say, as she wiped Harry's tear-stained face, and administered to him a consolatory orange, or a piece of cake, "and made to speak

different languages on purpose that they mightn't understand each other. And I say it's a cruel thing, Caleb Treherne, and an ungodly thing, to be torturing poor motherless lambs like Master Harry, just to undo what the Lord saw fit to do thousands of years ago."

A view of philology against which Mr. Treherne ventured no remonstrance, and which Harry thought very enlightened. For Harry's delights were not, it must be confessed, in the great deeds of Cæsar, or in the heroes of Homer; but in carving boxes and sticks with his tools, and in researches among the ponds on the remote wilds of Hampstead Heath for tadpoles and tittlebats, which he brought home in triumph on half holidays.

But the darkest day for the family was the annual visit to Mr. and Mrs. Felix Hunter, who lived with a family of young Hunters in a large house in Bedford Square. Cousin Felix was a successful man, and he was steeped in the consciousness of this; not that he obtruded the fact on others, but he felt he was an example, and the whole family shared the sentiment. The footman condescendingly opened the door and closed it on Mr. Leigh, and crept with a noiseless dignity about the house in the consciousness he was an example to footmen. The nursery was a model nursery. The children were examples from the cradle. The little Master Hunters trundled their hoops with a sober self-possession round the square gardens; and the little Miss Hunters daintily dandled their dolls in a way which was an example to nurse-

maids. The very babies sucked their thumbs in an exemplary manner, and looked at you with a calm stare of superiority, as if they felt they were "representative babies." So that, altogether, Mr. Leigh, who was never satisfied with himself or anything he did; and Harry, who was liable to human infirmities; and Grace, who felt every slight to Mr. Leigh far more than if it had been inflicted on herself, and every solecism of Harry's far more than if she had committed it herself, generally returned from Bedford Square on that memorable day in a very cowed and humbled state of mind.

Not that Mr. Felix Hunter made any especial efforts to impress Mr. Leigh with the sense of his comparative merits; he intended to be very affable and condescending. At first, indeed, when his poor cousin Mary married the poor curate, he did feel it a duty to press on him the necessity of making some effort. "What would even he himself have been unless he had made his own way?" He recommended Mr. Leigh to try for sundry lectureships in the city, and even to apply to some distinguished patrons to whom Mr. Hunter gave him introductions. But Mr. Leigh—after enduring agonies of conflict between his modesty and his duty to his family, and trying two or three times, and being found nowhere on the list of candidates, and receiving two or three polite letters from private secretaries of distinguished patrons acknowledging that "his lordship had received his letters, and had the greatest respect for Mr. Hunter, and

would consider Mr. Leigh's claims, but there were so many imperative demands, etc.—" gave up the struggle in despair. And thenceforward Mr. Hunter admitted that some people are born ineffective, and proceeded to turn the whole blaze of his example on Harry, confounding him with glimpses of wonderful prizes bound in calf which he had gained at public schools, and with impressive moral tales about what energy and ability can do, illustrated from his own autobiography. Everything, he said, depended on taking the right turn at the right moment.

Meantime Mrs. Hunter, who knew, she said, that good little girls like to make themselves useful, usually employed Grace in covering up and putting away ornaments and knick-knacks displayed at the grand party of the previous day, and rewarded her by showing her some gigantic drawings in colored chalks by her cousin Alicia; large enough for the ceiling of a Town-hall, and "very effective," Mrs. Hunter said. Once, at her father's desire, Grace had brought a delicate little coloring of a primrose, which cousin Alicia condescended to say was "very nicely done for a child;" but, she observed, that "flowers" had quite "gone out." Indeed, she spoke in a deprecatory way of her own pictures; and stated that next half she was to paint historical pictures in oils after the great masters; which made Grace feel as small beside her accomplished cousin as her primrose beside the colossal chalk drawing, one tuft of herbage in the foreground of which was as large as the whole primrose

plant together; and "all done," as Miss Alicia said triumphantly, "in three or four hours."

Mrs. Hunter's self-complacency took a different form from that of Mr. Hunter. With Mr. Hunter everything he possessed was a model; with Mrs. Hunter all her possessions, at least if Grace or Mr. Leigh praised them, were "mere every-day things," thrown entirely into the shade by some unknown magnificencies, that once had been, or one day were to be, hers, or which belonged to some acquaintance, who threw a reflected glory on her, from a region altogether beyond the possibility of Grace ever attaining even to the beatific vision of.

So the day wore on until the close, when Mr. Hunter, having hospitably handed his guest to the door, returned, and said to Mrs. Hunter, "Well, it is something to give those poor things one good dinner and one happy day in the year."

But Mr. Leigh meanwhile was returning home with a depressing sense that he ought in some way to have deserved and earned a large house in Bedford Square, and that he and his family were altogether, ecclesiastically and socially, a failure and a mistake, which depressing conviction was not usually relieved until some time in the next Monday afternoon holiday, when Mr. Leigh would say to Grace:

"Gracie, my child, if we do our best, God is very compassionate; and we cannot all be so successful as Cousin Felix. I don't really think we can. I am very sorry I had no better home for your poor dear mother, and for you and Harry; but the living

is a hundred a year, and the chaplaincy to the Union is fifty pounds more; and I don't see how I could get more, Gracie. I know I ought to have been a more successful man, Grace, and to have taken the right turn; but, indeed, I can't think where it was I took the wrong turn. I don't really think every one can succeed like Cousin Felix, do what they will."

And Grace, leaning like a small woman on her father's arm, would press the other hand round it and say:

"I would not have you like Mr. Hunter, or like any one but yourself, father, for the world. I think one hundred and fifty pounds a year regularly is a fortune; and I know the Miss Lovels do. It would be quite ungrateful, you know, not to think so: and then think how two or three of the people attend sometimes when you preach, and how the poor old people in the Workhouse look for you. A hundred and fifty pounds a year, father!" concluded Grace; "and then for such work—reading the Bible and comforting and teaching people! Is not that better than a hundred and fifty thousand a year for doing other things—poor worldly things, that do no one any good?"

Thus Mr. Leigh always resigned himself to be comforted.

"Poor sermons mine, Grace, I am afraid," he would say fondly, "to teach and comfort people! But I do always feel it an honor to read the prayers and the lessons. Yet you must not undervalue other people's callings, Gracie. Cousin Felix may

serve God in his calling as well as I in mine." To which Grace attempted no reply.

It was quite true that the Miss Lovels thought a hundred and fifty pounds a year regularly quite a fortune.

The regular income of the Miss Lovels was ten pounds a year, from some mysterious fund for the orphans of naval officers. Their father had been a lieutenant in the navy; their mother a pretty portionless daughter of a lieutenant in the marines. Cousin Felix would have disposed of the Miss Lovels' existence at once without further solicitude. "Such people as Mr. and Mrs. Lovel had no right to marry. Therefore, of course, the Miss Lovels had no right to exist. Their existence was altogether a mistake, and an impertinent intrusion into the universe. There was no place provided for them at the world's table; society had never invited or expected them at all; and, accordingly, they could never be too thankful if they were permitted now and then to rest for a time on the edge of other people's places, and to eke out a living from other people's meals."

Miss Lavinia, the youngest—both were elderly—was a pale, shadow-like, little woman, who seemed so to have accepted Mr. Hunter's verdict as to be in a general state of apology for her existence, and scarcely to have ventured to become a being of solid flesh and blood at all, but to be hovering perpetually on the borders of the world of shades. It would have seemed quite natural that,

as with a melancholy heathen ghost, the faint murmur should have died at its birth on the pale, parted lips; and as it was, her voice was always dropping into a whisper. Her face was like a faded sketch in her own antique water-colors; ringlets of fair, thin hair, from which the gold had been rubbed off; light, mild eyes. Her dress seemed to partake of the same colorless character. It did not sweep and rustle like other people's. She glided in and out among the pupils without displacing or coming in contact with anything, as if impenetrability were no property of the matter of which she was composed.

Her accomplishments (for Miss Lavinia undertook the accomplishments) were what might have been expected—'the shadow of a shade;' faint water-color sketches of a world evidently below or beyond the region of earthly color and substance, where the "brown air" was but feebly varied with shadowy grays; mild, indefinite little tunes on the worn-out cottage piano, which furnished the young ladies of the academy with music; a French which was a slightly nasal modification of English—echo of an echo of some French lessons her mother's mother had once had from an emigrant Abbé in the last century.

There had also been a shadowy love story flowing through a large portion of Miss Lavinia's life. A taciturn but unexceptionable young man, clerk in a government office, who had known her father and formed an attachment for her during that brief space when youth touched her pale features into a faint

glow of beauty: and for thirty years he had continued to accompany the sisters every Sunday to church, and to return with them to tea, on which occasions he said little in the conversation, but usually concluded by sending Miss Betsy to sleep with a sermon, followed by a few minutes of low-toned conversation with Miss Lavinia. Beyond this neither the clerk nor Miss Lavinia seemed to expect the matter to proceed. For twenty-five years there had been a widowed mother to be supported. Then followed four years of patient saving and extra working for the future possible home. Probably of too scanty living and too hard work; for at the end of those years came a year of failing health and strength, which made the Sunday visits difficult; and an obstinate cough, which stopped the reading of the sermon; and at last, one Sunday, a note in a trembling hand instead of a visit, full of hope—but never followed by another; and in a fortnight an announcement of a death, scarcely noticed by any but Miss Betsy, who perplexed herself all day how to break it to Lavinia, and then found at night that Lavinia had read it from the first in her face. And after this his will; by which Miss Lavinia Lovel was left sole executrix and residuary legatee of a fortune, which after paying doctor and undertaker, left Miss Lavinia a residue sufficient to purchase one mourning brooch for herself and one for her sister. And these, with an old well-worn leather writing-desk, formed the only visible relics of an engagement of thirty years.

The elder sister, Miss Betsy was a striking con-

trast to the younger. Plump, firmly built, with quick black eyes, black glossy hair, and a fixed bright color, she was prepared to do battle with the world both for her sister's existence and her own. To be "put down," or to be "put upon," were achievements the most strong-minded person would have found no easy matter with Miss Betsy. Indeed, perhaps the most solid and substantial existence Miss Lavinia attained was in the central place she occupied in Miss Betsy's very warm and human heart. For to Miss Betsy Miss Lavinia, shadow as she appeared to others, was the most real and living being in the creation. She had nursed her for hours together in her infancy, when scarcely more than a baby herself. In girlhood she had toiled at mending and sewing, and even at house-work, that Lavinia, who was always delicate, and was considered "talented," might pursue her accomplishments. And Miss Lavinia's accomplishments were to this day, now that they were elderly women together, the pride of Miss Betsy's heart, and in her belief the support of the academy, in which she never ventured beyond the "solid branches" of reading and writing, arithmetic, Pinnock's Goldsmith, sewing and darning. Outside the school, indeed, she admitted that perhaps Lavinia could not have done without her. The contest with impertinent landladies and parents, who attempted to 'screw' or to patronize and the bargains with acute shopkeepers, which were only a healthy excitement to the brave naval and marine blood which flowed in the true British veins of Miss

Betsy, would have soon altogether driven Miss Lavinia from these regions of conflict. As it was, the sound of dear Betsy's voice in such conflicts, and the decisive, military bang of the door as she returned triumphant from the glorious tumult of the fight, not unfrequently brought Miss Lavinia's "heart into her mouth," although she would not have betrayed it to Miss Betsy for the world.

To Miss Lavinia Miss Betsy was an Achilles, in whose presence everything was sure to prosper. To Miss Betsy Miss Lavinia was a genius, whose creations it was her happy vocation to appreciate and promote. Thus, happy in the illusions of their life-long love (if that, indeed, could be called illusion which love so truly made them to each other), the sisters found, in that life of endless small struggles to make the two ends of a very narrow income meet, which looked so dreary and poor to others, a life of endless little ennobling self-denials, and loving contrivances for each other, and generous concealments of want or pain.

And in that Day, when prizes are assigned, not as with Miss Alicia Hunter's drawings, according to size, but according to perfection—from that Bar whence this whole earth shall shrink to a planetary point, and the two mites count for a kingdom—on what a broad focus of light will the deeds of many such lives be projected!

For there was one region in which Miss Lavinia's life was neither shadowy nor feeble. Deep in that heart, whose earthly pulses beat so feebly, glowed the fire of Divine love. To her, God was, indeed,

the substance of all being, the one eternal, living "I Am," in whom alone all the true living live, and move, and have their being. To her Christ was the Light, and all else worth anything the reflection. To her, heaven was the reality and earth the shadow; and faith the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. In any conflict where prayer or trust in God were the weapons to be used, the relations between the sisters were reversed. Here it was Lavinia's tread that was steady, and her grasp that was firm; and the brave elder sister leaned on her, and wondered at her, and trusted her like a child.

Something of the same kind was the case with Mr. and Mrs. Treherne. In the shop, Mr. Treherne, with his small stature, his dark Celtic face, and his hesitating utterance, invariably yielded the palm to his stalwart Saxon wife, with her great hearty voice, her handsome, ponderous frame, her frank, animated face, and her very decisive opinions. But in all matters that concerned the "Society"—Mr. and Mrs. Treherne being hereditary Wesleyans of a century's standing—it was Mr. Treherne who was the giant, while his wife meekly sat at his feet. Not that Caleb Treherne was in any circumstances a man of quick, ready utterance. He was a class-leader; but his leading consisted rather in a faculty of drawing others out to speak and work than in saying much himself, except, indeed, in his prayers, which came out in quick, short, detached sentences, yet were always eloquent with the true eloquence of prayer—that is to say, they *were* prayers—words

spoken evidently with the conviction that God was nearer, and more ready to listen, and more able to understand, and infinitely more able and willing to help, than man. But it was in labors of love that Caleb Treherne rose to his true spiritual stature—going after "backsliders" to public houses; encountering violence with heroic gentleness; propping up weak resolves by timely encouragement; quenching despair by unquenchable hope. "Hopeless cases" were Caleb Treherne's chosen field. He never gave up any one; which implies that his cares were not confined to the "class," or the "meeting," but that his prayers in public were, indeed, only the feeble overflowings of the torrents of unutterable supplication he poured out in secret before God.

Caleb and Miss Lavinia were great allies. Many a wandering sheep they had watched and prayed over together—she on the sofa, where her weak spine obliged her to spend increasingly many hours, and he in solitary morning journeys in his market-cart, and in evening haunts among low courts and alleys. Not that they had often met. Miss Lavinia seldom went out except to church, and neither of the sisters would have dreamt of setting foot in a meeting-house; but Caleb was handy, and had done many occasional little services for the sisters, and Miss Lavinia had an especial interest in the poor, hard-worked, half-starved little maids-of-all-work who appeared at their lodgings, and occasionally, after loud words in the kitchen, disappeared, no one but Caleb could find out where.

Her attention had first been drawn to these poor

girls some years since, when she was sitting one morning, not long after her lover's death, at the open window, and heard the baker's boy address a new maid who had come in that morning:

"Good luck to you, miss," he said; "I've seen ten on 'em in these six months. They mostly comes on Saturdays and leaves on Mondays. They says the Missis is particular, and the victuals ain't nothing particular. But four on 'em stayed; and one on 'em is at Colney Hateh Madhouse; and one in the prison; and one was took up by the p'lice for drowning of herself; and you're the fifth. I wish you good luck, miss." And the baker's boy went up the steps humming a jaunty popular air, but quite unconscious that he had dropped a living seed of compassion into Miss Lavinia's heart. Thenceforward she had the little maids in on Sunday, and read the Bible and spoke kindly to them. Her Sunday evenings were unoccupied now, she said; and from that time dated her friendship with Caleb Treherne.

Both Miss Lavinia and Miss Betsy would as soon have thought of recognizing an irregular army and navy, as an irregular company of preachers. It was very shocking, they both thought, and a proof of the degeneracy of the times, that uneducated men who could not pronounce their *h's* should set themselves up in pulpits. But there is a good deal of the work in this wilderness of a world which cannot be done by people standing in pulpits or on platforms, or any other high places; however loud they may call, the wandering sheep do not always

come back for calling, but have to be followed in quite an irregular way into most irregular places, and brought back on the shoulders, or on the bosom, or in any other way in which they can be got to come. And for such work Miss Lavinia thought the services of quite uneducated people, who could not even pronounce their *h's*, ought not to be declined, the great thing being *to get it done.*

And Caleb Treherne did it, as countless volunteers are doing it, working every day and night in ragged schools, and crowded London alleys, among Cornish mines or Northern collieries, unknown to the Miss Lovels, or indeed to any of the "higher classes," or perhaps to any one except the wandering sheep they bring back, and the Good Shepherd who is watching, and those whom the Good Shepherd calls to rejoice with him. Blundering, no doubt, and stumbling, and sometimes failing and fainting on their way, as most of us do; but still now and then just rescuing some one poor, lost, perishing brother for whom Christ died, and thereby, we are told, causing a new thrill of joy in the presence of God.

The Miss Lovels had been Mrs. Leigh's first friends on her arrival in the parish, and now after fifteen years of that continual flow of emigration which, as we are told, is always impelling the Indo-European races from the east to the west, they were the only friends in her own position of life remaining in the district.

During those fifteen years there had been a steady

decline in the social dignity of the young ladies who attended the Miss Lovels' Academy.

There had been days, Miss Betsy said (she being the more sophisticated and worldly of the two), when gentlemen who drove their gigs, and one lady whose father kept a chariot and pair, and professional men, lawyers and doctors, who had connections in the army or navy or government offices, and would on no account have "demeaned themselves" to trade, had been proud to send their children to study with the Miss Lovels. "Then Grace, my dear," she said, one day just before the holidays, "we had something like examinations! The young ladies repeating their pieces and playing their tunes so prettily, and the table covered with their drawings, screens, and portfolios of embossed cardboard, and watch-pockets, and painting on velvet, and bunches of wax flowers as large as life, which the parents thought it well worth while to put under glass shades. And Mr. Bellamy (his brother is in the Customs, and he was a man of the most refined language, and always spoke as correctly as if he was at a public meeting), I remember his coming up to me and saying, with a bow fit for a court, before all the parents and scholars, 'Miss Lovel, these paintings by my granddaughter would do credit to the Royal Academy. No doubt, all have not equal talents, but these productions do infinite credit, ladies, both to your capabilities and your exertions as instructresses.' And now the grocer's wife in the next street comes to me and complains that for what she pays she thinks it bare

justice that her daughter should be able in a twelvemonth to paint something fit to hang up in their parlor, and that the National schoolmistress teaches more geography than we do! It was a great pity that ever we took tradespeople's children," concluded Miss Betsy, "and it is a great imposition that charity-children should be taught geography at all. What chance have the daughters of gentlemen if Government sets up young women who ought to be thankful to know how to sew and read their Bibles, to dress in silks and velvets, and to teach any beggar's brat that will learn, the atlas and the grammar? I can't think what the world will come to; and not a maid-of-all-work to be found who knows how to shake a feather-bed!"

But Miss Lavinia, who was always afraid lest in railing against the course of the world, her sister should be unconsciously railing against Providence, and who was also anxious not to give gloomy impressions of life to Grace, observed gently:

"I suppose Government thought a good deal about it, sister, first; and after all there's no going beyond Providence. It does seem as if some people got out of the stream, and were left behind somehow; especially women, and especially when everything goes so fast as it does now. But I suppose if one were only *on* the stream, it would seem a very fine thing to see it going so fast. We must get you on the stream, Grace dear, if we can," she concluded.

"I suppose the people on the stream are always seeing new shores," pursued Grace musing, "while

those who are left behind always see the same shores, only new waters and new boats always passing them. But, please, I had much rather not get into the stream and leave any one behind."

"There is a river which leaves no one behind, dear, whether they will or no," said Miss Lavinia softly; "and there is a River, the streams whereof make glad the city of God. We should not mind being left behind by all the world, if we are borne home on *that* River, Gracie."

At this moment Miss Betsy found some work which required a good deal of moving about, as she frequently did when her sister fell into that strain, and at length, when Grace left, she said, rather impatiently, "Well, Lavinia, I am sure I meant no disrespect to Government or to Providence; but it does seem to me as if things were in a general way left to themselves. Of course, they get shaken right now and then when they are going too far wrong; and there is the Deluge, or the Philistines, or the captivity, as the Bible tells us. But between times it does seem to me things are allowed to go a good bit out of the way. It may be my temptation, but that's how it seems to me. And I never shall think Government can be justified for letting those young women at the National Schools teach geography; or that it's a good thing for all the respectable people in the parish to go and live miles away in the country, leaving the tradespeople to set themselves up as gentry, and the poor to sink into savages or American republicans. And I always shall think it mysterious that

your talents should be wasted at this end of the town."

Miss Betsy's controversy with society was, you see, extensive and profound; and Miss Lavinia having long given up both the hope of disentangling her sister's many social perplexities, and the feminine ambition of having the last word, dropped the subject.

Only as they read the Bible together in the evening, and, as it happened, came in their course to the tenth chapter of St. John, she paused a moment at the words, "He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out," and said, "Then there must always be some bewilderments and perplexities to *lead them out of*, mustn't there, sister? It always bewilders one so to think of Government, and Providence, and society. And then it is such a help to come back to the '*by name*,' and '*one by one*.' That's how He leads us, and that's what I think we've got to do for one another. '*By name*,' and '*one by one*.' And, sister," she continued, "I'd rather you wouldn't say it's mysterious that I am not more appreciated. It always seems to me mysterious I get on as well as I do; of course, I shouldn't if it weren't for you. And I forgot to tell you that Caleb Treherne has found that poor little runaway Jenny, and got her into a place with a good woman who will be kind and look after her."

That was Miss Lavinia's way of disentangling the perplexities of our social system. She was incapable of climbing to any earthly height from which she could command a prospect of the field

of the world. But there are two points, one in the depths and one on the upper heights, from which its perplexities are less perplexing than from any intermediate regions. One is in the path of lowly obedience and only reveals to-day; and the other is on the threshold of eternity, and commands the ages. And while the "love that is not puffed up and seeketh not her own," kept Miss Lavinia's steps to the one, the faith which endures as seeing Him who is invisible, frequently bore her on eagle wings to the other.

Miss Lavinia had unconsciously touched on one of Grace's greatest difficulties, when she spoke of getting her "out of the creek into the stream." Leaving the Miss Lovels behind was exactly the thing she was always afraid of some day doing. It seemed to her such a disloyalty not to think as highly of those water-colors, which were, in Miss Betsy's eyes, the perfection of art; and whose excellences even Miss Lavinia but mildly disclaimed. Yet after vainly endeavoring to accommodate the view of the world taken in these drawings to anything either at Greenwich, in the Parks, or on Hampstead Heath; after looking in vain for the brown foreground tree tapering like a telescope, and then having to sustain three gigantic tufts of brown vegetation, which had apparently crushed its trunk into a helpless curvature of the spine; and for the round gray woolly balls on the woodland distance, or the similar white gray woolly balls in the sky, Grace had taken refuge in a theory that there must be fashions in painting as in other things,

and concluded that Miss Lavinia's paintings were as much beyond criticism and impertinent comparison with nature as the sculptures of Egypt or of Nineveh. Meanwhile, inasmuch as the fashions did not change in natural things, and the crimson-tipped daisy was evidently clothed in the same garb as the one beneath Burns' plough; and the primroses had not grown paler nor the grass greener since Shakspeare's time; and the "lilies of the field" (if, as her father thought, they meant the scarlet poppy or anemone) had kept their first glory longer still; and since, moreover, Grace could command mosses and flowers and vegetables in brown baskets to copy; and could not command woods and lakes and mountains, she thought it safer, and certainly pleasanter, to abandon the lofty regions of landscape in which Miss Lavinia and her cousin Alicia Hunter disported themselves, and to hover quietly like a honey bee over the mosses and grasses and sweet lowly blossoms.

She had also vainly struggled against the conviction that she learned more geography from the maps at the National School than from the "geography book." And besides the uncomfortable suspicion which she had mentioned to Winifred, as to whether the Miss Lavinia's French would be quite understood in France, the organist, on the day of the last recorded conversation with the Miss Lovels, gave a ruthless blow to her musical acquirements, when, at her father's request, she had played him the most elaborate of Miss La-

vinia's quadrilles, by declaring that she must begin at the beginning, and practice scales and exercises, and then he had no doubt he could make something of her. Poor little Grace could have cried, not at her own failure, but at the thought how vexed Miss Lavinia would be if she were to hear it; for Miss Lavinia had pronounced that she could teach her no more, an announcement which had exalted Grace into a prodigy in the estimation of all the other young ladies, and especially of Miss Betsy. It was terrible to the tender-hearted loyal child to feel the world, and even herself, do what she could to hide it, thus leaving her mother's old kind friends behind. Thus it happened that her compassionate reverent thoughts, with the recollection of Miss Lavinia's words, embodied themselves that night in a dream. She seemed to be stranded in a reedy creek, with her father and the Miss Lovels in four little boats, while all the world was rowing and sailing or steaming merrily past them in gay barges and steamers; national schoolmistresses in brilliant ribbons, and the "young ladies" of the academy itself with their parents, in the most fashionable shawls and bonnets, and Cousin Alicia with a painting as large as those in the Houses of Parliament, and Mr. and Mrs. Hunter serenely contemplating it. All this would not have distressed Grace in the least, for she would have been happier with her friends in the creek, than with all the rest of the world on the broad stream, had it not been for an uneasy feeling that they had all to go somewhere, and ought to be getting on; and for the scornful,

or reproachful, or compassionate gestures of the people who *were* getting on in the steamers and barges. But worse than all, it happened that Grace's own boat was on the outer edge of the creek and all but in the current, and friendly but mistaken people every now and then would give her a helping hand, so that she was in continual dread of being swept away with the crowd. At last the dreaded moment came; Winifred Bertram came floating by, and with a little laughing touch actually set Grace's boat drifting down the stream. Then just as she had dropped her oars, and was crying bitterly as she lost sight of the old familiar shores, she heard her father's voice saying, "Never mind, Grace, look up, it will be all right at last;" and rising in the boat to look, she suddenly caught, through the reedy jungle on the banks, a glimpse of another river flowing from the further end of the creek where they had been stranded. As she looked longer, she saw that it was not a river, but an arm of the great sea beyond, and the waves came slowly sweeping up, till they flooded its banks, and filled the creek to the brim, and floated the stranded boats. And when the ebb came, she saw them borne along the golden tide to the golden sea beyond, which was clear as crystal, yet glowing through and through as if with fire. And she saw that from that forgotten creek and the boats stranded there out of the way of the world, there was a way to the Crystal Sea and the Golden City, more direct even than by the great stream. And Grace awoke, and thought a long time over her dream, and was comforted.

For the Miss Lovels were not the only people she knew whom the busy eager world had left behind, or was leaving behind, on that forsaken strand of the east of London. There was a laundress whose customers had migrated westward, and who was too old to follow, and who had long stories of the good old families she had washed for in the good old times. There was a poor widow whose mother had made a decent living by needlework, who was now engaged in a hopeless struggle with the "sewing machines," and had the greatest difficulty in eking out bread for her little ones from the workhouse allowance, and making shirts at a penny three-farthings each, with the thread to buy. And to these, and to many others, the progress of society seemed the progress of a Juggernaut, out of whose way they had no strength to struggle.

And with regard to all these it was a great comfort to think there was a way still open to the sea of glass and the songs of triumph and the city of God, even for those who have been baffled and stranded on this stream of time.

But, perhaps, the friend closest of all to Grace's heart was Mrs. Anderson, the baker's wife, who lived on the opposite side of the street. For Mrs. Anderson had nursed Mrs. Leigh with the tenderness of a mother and the reverence of an old servant, and there was a natural courtesy and dignity about her which prevented her ever wounding Mr. Leigh's or Grace's feelings by the unconscious patronage which sometimes tasked Grace's humility to the utmost with Mrs. Treherne. Mrs. Tre-

herne looked on Mr. Leigh and Grace, not to mention her own children and her husband and the Miss Lovels as a kind of "feeble folk" whom it was her "mission" to direct and take care of, if they were submissive, with gentleness; if not, with decision, for their good, whether they liked it or not.

But Mrs. Anderson had too strong an individuality of her own not to respect other people's. Besides she had not the Saxon aggressiveness of Mrs. Treherne, which does not improve the manners; but rather a Celtic or Oriental passiveness, when it was not a question of right or wrong, which gives a high-toned mixture of repose and deference to the manner, worthy of the best society. To Mrs. Treherne a difference of opinion was a thing which brought her out of her shell to contend and conquer, and perhaps at some occasions to be conquered. With Mrs. Anderson a difference of opinion sent her back into her shell to endure and to defend, and perhaps to be silenced, but never to be conquered.

Moreover, Mrs. Anderson came from a fallen ancestry, and a race that had known better days. She had married a Lowlander, of whose "English" as of his pedigree she thought little; but her grandfather had been a Highland farmer in Sutherlandshire, and her own childhood had been spent in one of the fishing villages on the coast, into which the inland peasantry were crowded when their houses were unroofed and their glens were depopulated to make way for the gigantic sheep-farms.

Many a tale of wrong and ruin Mrs. Anderson told Grace as she initiated her into the mysteries of heels and toes of stocking-knitting. The old histories dropped from her lips in quiet cadences of voice, falling monotonously like a Gregorian chant; with as little comment on the right or wrong, and as few tempests of indignation as in the old Scriptural narratives, but with that irresistible pathos of unexaggerated facts, which burns into the heart more than the most vehement denunciations. Deep into Grace's heart sank the story of those old wasted homes. She saw the deep glens among the hills, each with its own cluster of farms and cottages, the inhabitants for the most part very poor, and earning a precarious livelihood in that uncertain climate, but loving their homes and their burial places with the tenacity of affection peculiar to a race much of whose life is in the past rather than in the future. She followed them in their Sabbath gatherings from many a scattered glen to the church where their forefathers had prayed, and around which they had been laid to rest for generations, and she seemed to have heard the solemn singing of their grand old hymns when they met from far and wide on the hillside for a Sacrament. Grand old hymns they were. Mrs. Anderson said there were none like them. Some of them had been brought in old days from the Continent, where one of the chiefs had led many of his clansmen to fight for Gustavus Adolphus in the great Protestant conflict of the seventeenth century. More than one of Mrs. Anderson's family

bore the name of the Swedish hero; and some of Grace's most vivid glimpses of history were those which came to her through these old Highland traditions of the Thirty Years' War. Homer, and Shakespeare, and Mrs. Anderson were indeed her chief historical authorities, and the Iliad with its brave tender-hearted dying hero seemed to her strangely to spring forth again in the Christian king who never spared himself, and died on the victorious field; and again in those poor, brave, patient Highlanders, whose houses were unroofed, and their women cast homeless on the world, while they were far away victoriously fighting the battles of the nation. Many a time she cried heartily as she thought of the poor families leaving the unroofed houses of their fathers, the poor household furniture which had made the old home so homelike, looking so forlorn as it was stowed away in the farm cart; and the cattle which had been such familiar friends in the simple country life, sold away as if they were mere chattels; and they themselves huddled into wretched crowded villages on the coast, where those who still clung to the old country were left to struggle with starvation year after, while the sheep were grazing in their desolated glens, delighting in the greener patches which marked where the ruined homesteads had been.

Many a time little Grace listened to the quietly told tale of bitter wrongs, in speechless indignation; but when she spoke, Mrs. Anderson gave but a faint response. At least, so Grace used to think at first. Afterwards she learned that such

wrongs are not alleviated by words. They must either be avenged, or endured. There were only two alternatives; and the Sutherlandshire Highlanders had chosen the latter.

Once, indeed, Grace, fresh from the Odyssey, had come primed with consolations for the wrongs of her friend's kindred.

She gave her the history of the Iliad, the death of Hector, and the lamentings of the Trojan women. Mrs. Anderson considered it must have been like an old Highland funeral.

"But, Mrs. Anderson," Grace continued, "there was another history to follow. Scarcely one of those old heroes reached their homes in safety, and none without years of sorrowful wanderings. So you see the gods did avenge after all."

"That may be, Miss Grace," said Mrs. Anderson; "but you see they were but heathen gods after all, and had nothing but this world, poor things, to look to. So the stories had to be finished off on earth. But we have got the Bible, and for the most part you'll see the Bible stories do not not get finished in this world at all. Nor, I think, do ours."

"But," said Grace, "to burn the house down about the poor old mother, while the sons were fighting the battles of the country! Surely there are some things God punishes even here."

"Well," said Mrs. Anderson, "I'll not say that I've not heard very dark stories of the way the factors who did that work came to their end. And one thing, I know," she continued, with a quiet

irony, "they may search the hills far and wide before they'll fill up the Highland regiments now. 'Will you not fight for the country?' said the recruiting sergeants, and the men gave answer, 'We've no country to fight for.' They may hunt the deer on the mountains, and count their sheep by thousands in the glens, but when they want something else than sheep and deer to fight their battles, the men are away, hunted out of hearing, over the hills and over the seas, and they'll find them hard to reach."

"But," said Grace, struggling hard for a visible solution of the problem which weighed on her heart, "you say the people have better homes in the new country than in the old; and, perhaps, God meant the new countries to have people living in them, and made the cruel people bring about good in that way. You know, Mrs. Anderson, there was Joseph; he was even sold for a slave, yet God did make it end well."

"The Lord forbid I should say it's not all well, Miss Grace; but it's not for me to be peeping and prying into His reasons. How would I know I'd not put down the wrong reason after all, and so been blaspheming him? No doubt, the Lord ordains all things, and, no doubt, all that He ordains is right. No doubt we are but the clay in the hand of the potter, and shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, What doest Thou? The world was not created for us, Miss Grace, nor we for ourselves, but for the Lord."

Grace was awed and silenced, and refrained from

further consolation. As she looked at Mrs. Anderson's grave, worn, earnest face, and heard the deep reverent tone in which she spoke, she felt there was a majesty in such unconditional submission beside which all her struggles to find out reasons seemed the restless frettings of a baby.

"But, Mrs. Anderson," she ventured to say at length, "God does care for us, does n't He, even in the little things by the way as well as in the great things at the end? Even for the sparrows, you know, he cares, our Lord said."

"*Cares* for us! Miss Grace," exclaimed Mrs. Anderson, her clear gray eye for a moment kindling, and then vailing its fire in tears. "I should just think he does! As he cares for the sparrows? No! as a father pities his children, his babes! Cares for us? Why, he died for us, my poor lamb. He died on the cross for us. Cares for us? No wonder! And more than that. He redeemed us by his blood, He saved us, paid the whole ransom and set us free; took the whole burden, and will bring us the whole way through to share the whole glory. The Lord does no half works, Miss Grace, and gives no half-gifts, and forgives with no half-forgiveness. He forgives and *forgets* (he says it), and washes us white as snow, and never leaves nor forsakes his people till he gets the poor ragged prodigal to his Father's heart, and the poor cripple beggar on the king's throne."

Mrs. Anderson was a firm adherent of the old Covenanting theology, and thought rather little of the orthodoxy of the Independent Chapel which her

husband sometimes attended, as the nearest approach to Presbyterianism within reach on wet evenings.

Many a battle she had with Mrs. Treherne for her Calvinism; but Caleb, orthodox Wesleyan that he was, felt no uneasiness about it. "For," said Caleb, "Mrs. Anderson believes that every thing good begins, and goes through, and ends with the Lord, and so did John Wesley; and as to what happened before the beginning, it's my belief, neither Mrs. Anderson nor I, nor John Wesley himself could tell. And she believes that it's a real fight we're in with the devil, not a got-up fight arranged beforehand like a puppet-show; and that if we pray, the Lord hears and does help us and others too; and if we go after the lost sheep, he does really help us to bring them back when they were going further and further away. And she believes it's no painted fight, and no painted devil, and no painted Saviour, but a real fight to be lost or won, and a real devil, and a real Saviour; not a helper only, but the Saviour. Mrs. Anderson's a real good woman, and has behaved like a mother to that poor little straying maid I found out for Miss Lovel. And if she's got some twists; why so have most of us, and so I expect we shall until we get put straight in the other world." For Caleb was not metaphysical; and he was well acquainted with Mrs. Anderson, who, besides this history of her kindred, had an especial history of her own, which Grace did not learn till afterwards. Mrs. Anderson, on her part, thought Caleb very "sound for an Englishman."

Little Grace was not ignorant of these theologi-

cal discussions; and although once when she questioned Mr. Leigh about them, he said these were things quite beyond a little girl's comprehension, she could not help pondering them in her mind, until at last she found her way to the great foundation question of the origin of evil. For a very short flight brings us to the bars of our cage, and little children climb very soon to the bottom of difficulties which no philosopher can scale.

"It is very difficult," she thought, "and yet if we were to be *people* at all, and not *things* to be moved about, it does seem as if it could not be helped that we might go wrong if we would."

So, Grace having beaten her wings a little while against the bars, wisely turned from them altogether and soared upward, there being no bars to hinder the flight of the mind or heart in that direction; the temple of the world, like the ancient temples, being always open to the sky. She took refuge in God himself. "For thou, O God," she thought, "art love." And then when her thoughts came down to earth again, she found there the stem of the Cross, at the foot of which she could rest as peacefully as in the heights above the clouds. For there also, in a cry of anguish, and in crimson stains she could read as clearly as in characters of light, and in songs of joy above, "Thou art love."

But Mrs. Anderson had a personal history of her own quite independent of the history of her people; and it was this which, as it came pouring out one day in an hour of rare confidence, drew Grace's heart to her so closely forever.

"I was not always a childless old woman, Miss Grace, as I am now. I came to London as rich as Hannah when the Lord had heard her prayer. Not that I had seven bairns; but my two were as much to me as seven. One was a bonny lad, as full of spirit as Master Harry; and one was a lassie with fair hair like yourself. Maybe that's why I think so much of you. I had known pretty much what it is to be poor, and I set myself to work, heart and soul, that Alick and Maggie might never taste a bitter drop out of that cup. I saved and toiled, and I stinted and I spared; and I grudged many a time to see how hungry my goodman was. I thought it was all duty and love. But the Lord knew better, Miss Grace, and a sore controversy He had with me. It's a long story; but I'll make it short. First, He laid his hand on the worldly goods. We were settled in Glasgow, and had a pretty business, when a new-fashioned man came with advertisements and new-fangled devices, and embellishments, and undersold us, and beguiled away our customers. He was ruined himself afterwards, poor foolish man: but little comfort was there in that. Then we came to London. And a very mysterious dispensation I thought it, Miss Grace, that the Lord should prosper an upstart like that, and let diligent, honest, old-established people, like James Anderson and me, be banished from the country. Many a time we tangle our threads and let down our stitches, Miss Grace, and then talk of the Lord's mysterious dispensations! But that's neither here nor there. Well, we prospered well in London. And then I

thought the Lord, as it were, had found out what we were at last, and was giving us our reward. And the foolish man in Glasgow failed, which proved, I said to James Anderson, that there is a Providence that orders all. I thought it the most fitting thing in the world, Miss Grace, that all the good things should drop into our hands, such sober, frugal people as we were. If James Anderson had been made Lord Mayor, I believe I should have thought it the most natural thing in the world, and have thanked the Almighty for doing the right thing, and never have had a thought I was like the Pharisee in the parable. I thought I was as humble as the publican, for I was never one that made a loud profession of religion. We always put our mite into the 'ladle' when the deacon came round. Our 'mite,' I called it, for what indeed had I to spare more than the poor widow (I thought), with Alick and Maggie to provide for, and Alick to make a minister of, if the Lord gave him the call. So I spared more and more, and grudged more and more, and despised the poor people who were so foolish as not to get on in the world, and had never a thought all the time that I was coiling a serpent close around my heart. But the Lord knew; and He visited me again. This time He laid his hand not on the goods but on the bairn. Alick took the fever, and spite of all I could do, and all the doctors could do; for the one idol broke the other as it fell, Miss Grace, and I spared neither silver nor gold —the laddie died.

"And then all the rebellion broke out in my heart

again. I did not say a murmuring word. But my whole life was one long murmur from morning to night. My prayers were murmurs; my thanksgivings were murmurs; for I thanked the Almighty, or I tried to thank him, that I was not as the poor, careless wretches around me. They never prayed, I said, and their bairns were not smitten! It was not for me, who was honored by His chastening, to wish myself as they, going as they were going on the broad road to destruction. At least that was the bitter comfort I tried to find out of my anguish, when I heard the little ones laugh and gambol, and would have given all I had in the world for one clasp of the little arms that were cold. At first I told you my idol was broke by the fall of the other. But the beautiful idol was gone from my sight, and the hideous, monstrous thing, set itself up again stronger than ever.

"I would make our Maggie a lady, I thought. Easy enough to do, I thought, and she so fair and gentle, with such winning ways of her own; no days of want should come near her! I would send her to the Miss Lovels with you, Miss Grace, I thought; and she should be fit to take her part with the best in the country. So the old serpent crept in again. And I spared, and saved, and stinted, and counted the gains that were, and the gains that should be, and had never a penny to give beyond the 'mite' I could give without feeling it. And all, I thought, for Maggie, and for love and duty! Was not he that did not provide for his own house worse than an infidel?

"The Almighty did not leave me without many a warning from his own word. Most times I was clever enough to turn the edge of his messages straight off on my neighbors. But one word cut me sharp for the time.

"It was the New Year's Day after Alick was taken, and I was straying along with no heart for church or home, when I passed a church well lighted for service, and filled with many poor, humble-looking people; and something made me go in. The minister was half through his sermon, and I never knew the text, but his words were very searching, and they searched me—or, I should say, the Lord searched me *with them.* He said New Year's Days are questioning days. The Lord was catechizing us all, as it were. We were taking stock, he said of our goods; but our goods, as it were, were also taking stock of us. We asked what we had made of them. God was asking what they had made of us. Now, whatever the last year had been, he said it had been one of conflict. Whether we knew it or not, he was sure of that. On whichever side *we* were, there had been a battle going on for us and within us between the Saviour and the Devil. He went on to say—and that was what cut me—that the Devil had sometimes no objection to help us even against our sins. He drove out the sins of youth by the sins of age. He drove out the lust of the flesh by the lust of the eye, and the lust of the eye by the pride of life; and the warm, quick sins of youth, by the cold, slow sins of age. But all the Devil's driving *out*, he said, was really

only driving *in*. 'You,' he said, looking at me (I thought), 'who think you are above caring for show, and pleasure and folly, take care you have not exchanged all these idols for a worse than all—the service of Mammon, the love of money. Not caring for outward shows, but caring infinitely for what will give you the *power* to *purchase* these if you liked; you who scorn the pride and gewgaws of youth, take care you are not priding yourselves on being above pride. Take care you are not taking your idols from the court of the Temple to the Holy Place. Take care you are not driving your enemies from the field into the citadel. Take care whether you are driving your sins *out* or *in*.'

"Those words haunted me long. It was Mr. Bertram who was preaching; and often and often the question came back—*Out or in?* Are you driving your sins out or in?

"However, I got the better of that controversy, and persuaded myself that it was no love of money, but the love of Maggie, which made me grudge, stint, and save. Was n't she God's gift to us? And besides the natural love in my heart, had I not the Lord's own command to care for the lassie? So the serpent coiled tighter and tighter, and I nourished it in my bosom, and called it a heavenly grace. But the Lord knew better, Miss Grace. And he smote me again; and this time the stroke came home.

"He took my Maggie, my poor, own, only bairn. He smote the lassie, and she died. And then I sat seven days by the dead child, with the chests stored

with fine linen for her wedding, and she that would never need but that one white shroud in which she lay stretched before me! I did not make much moaning; where was the use? Nor did I make much prayer. The Pharisee's prayers die on the lips when the anguish is great as mine. I could not stand up against the rod and thank God he had stricken me now, and that I was not like other men. A poor, abject, bruised, earthly-hearted, childless woman, that would have gone on my knees to be allowed to be like even the poorest beggar I despised, only to have my Maggie again. I was down, Miss Grace, down! And there were the profits that Christmas, like a little fortune! We might have sent the bairn to the first school in the land—and there she lay in her little four feet of grave. I sought no comfort. I hoped for none. I had no controversy with the Lord. I had felt his hand. But I crouched under it like a poor, smitten, abject hound, with all the human heart beaten out of me. But that was not what the Lord meant, Miss Grace. That was not what he meant!

"That New Year's Day I strayed in again, my goodman and I, into Mr. Bertram's Church. He had another question that night; it was, 'Upward or Downward.' He said (or that was what I mind his saying) every sorrow was like a landing-place on the great winding stair of life. Two ways led from it—up and down; and two Spirits stood there, the spirit of evil and the Spirit of God; and one tried to lead us *downwards* and the other *upwards*. And downwards or upwards we must go; for the

ground was slippery, and no one could stand still on it.

"'Now,' he said, 'there you are, but there you cannot stay. A great grief has smitten you down. Will you listen to the Tempter who is trying to make you think hard thoughts of God? Will you believe that because the Lord *hateth* you he chasteneth you? Will you crouch and writhe from under the rod? Will you glide down, with your hand in the enemy's, from slope to slope, from depth to depth, from darkness to darkness, until *you* are fit to become a *tempter* like him, and to say to others, as he says to you, 'God hath forgotten! Tush! he regardeth not! What are your griefs to him? Could he not have healed them all with a word? He sits on high and rules the stars, not you and your poor little petty lives.' Or will you *bow down* beneath the rod, and *look up* beneath it, and take the gracious Hand of the Comforter, stretched out to you, and let him lift you up, when His time comes; and bruised, and humbled, and broken as you are, lead you gently on and up to where he can show you *what danger he drove you from* in smiting you? until he makes *you* a *comforter* too, and from your poor, trembling lips shall drop on the hearts of other mourners such words as He speaks to you. 'Because the Lord *loveth* he chasteneth you.' He cares for every pang you suffer. But he cares infinitely more to save you from *sin*. For *that* He bowed beneath not the scourge only, but the cross. For *that*, dearly as He loves you, He spares neither rod, nor sword, nor fire. And *that*, if you will yield

yourselves up to His will and His way with all your hearts, He will do.'

"I went out, Miss Grace, and my goodman said it was a fine discourse for the Church of England. But I said nothing. Not Mr. Bertram, but the Lord himself had been preaching to me. And I went to my poor Maggie's little empty room, and knelt down by her little empty bed, a poor, broken-hearted, stricken, sinful woman, without a ray of goodness, or strength, or hope, and I said, 'Lord, Lord, not *down*, but *up!* I have no foothold; I have no strength. Oh, stretch out thy hand; let me not perish! Hold Thou me up!—up! Not *downwards*, but *upwards*.' And he heard me! Heard me? Had not he been calling me all those years, until at last he opened my heart to hear? And since then He has given me many little things to do for Him, and never to this day let me set up the idol again. And to this day I pray He never will."

Thus little Grace received her education in a way that brought her early into contact with some historical facts not mentioned in her "Pinnock's Goldsmith," and with many very ancient problems, social, political, and theological.

She learned that the natural dignity of character and the delicate consideration for others which constitutes good-breeding, are not peculiar to any social class.

She learned that in England, in this nineteenth century, as a matter of fact, there exist more than one form of ecclesiastical organization, deeply

rooted in the hearts and homes of the people, rich in historical memories, and strong with the force of early hereditary association, and in the activity of expansive Christian life. Church history came before her as a question of facts rather than of rights. She became acquainted with various doctrinal and ecclesiastical differences, as absorbed into living Christian hearts, instead of as petrified into systems and confessions. She had grown to feel the unity before she learned to perceive the variety.

On the other hand, brought up in that forsaken East of London, she was little tempted to consider the world a Utopia, or to round off the broken and fragmentary human histories around her into pretty little finished moral tales. All her instinct for piercing through the discord to the harmony could not resolve in this visible sphere the discord of life. History, on the great or on the small scale, seemed to her strangely typified in the two earliest epics of our race. The music of the Iliad and the Odyssey floated around her like a grand mystical prelude to the world's history, in which the melodies of the drama to come were wonderfully gathered and foreshadowed. Wars and wanderings of the heroes were to her a picture in a magic mirror of the wars and wanderings of human life, through which all the true heroes must be trained. Her father, and Caleb Treherne, and the Miss Lovels, and Mrs. Anderson, and even she and Harry, like Hector, and Ulysses, and Gustavus Adolphus, had their own plains of Troy, and their own stormy Voyage Home by perilous unknown shores. Not

that she could distinctly have stated this to herself; but all these influences together helped to mould the loving, buoyant heart, into such a temper of self-sacrificing courage, and self-denying endurance, as is needed by all who would be good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Chapter VI.

AN entirely new light began to dawn on Winifred as to the meaning and object of "lessons." Dictionaries and Grammars were becoming glorified in her eyes into "keys of the Expanding Palace."

The unmeaning and disjointed planks and nails she had been laboriously shaping and sharpening as a mere mechanical labor were, she began to see, only the materials for building ships which were to be her wings to bear her on to new worlds. And thenceforth every rib, and plank, and nail became to her like the feathers of these new wings. That connection between the details and the whole, between the little tasks and the great purposes of life, began to be revealed to her, which has power to transfigure manufacture into art; the aimless treading of the treadmill into the joyous climbing of "the world's great altar-stairs;" the toil of the beast of burden into the work of those whose destiny it is to be fellow-workers with God. A great point to be reached in any kind of education.

When it is reached in that education whose grammars and lexicons are hardships and disappointments, humiliations and successes, joys and sorrows, and whose school is life, the weariness and bitterness pass out of everything, a glorious significance shines through the dullest lives; the poor nails and planks of time are seen to be indeed but as feathers of the new wings which are to bear us on to new worlds; the daily task which is training us is found also to be the daily work which is enriching us. Not, indeed, that the wisest of us, any more than Winifred, can see *how* the disjointed planks are to grow into the ship. We are not the architects of our own destiny, but only the day-laborers, under the Architect; but we believe in it, and we believe in Him, and that is enough.

For other educations were being carried on beside and around Winnie's.

Mrs. O'Brien and Maurice were also learning their lessons, a fact of which Winnie had no idea, she having a vague persuasion that the primary meaning of being grown-up is having finished one's education, and having, moreover, a very definite conviction that Maurice, at all events, had learned all any one could ever have to learn, and had nothing to do henceforth but to help other people up to the point he had reached. This new impulse to Winnie's activities had been communicated from more than one point.

In the first place she had been learning the meaning of prayer. She had begun to know it not as an exercise to be gone through, but as a real means

of communication with God. And whenever prayer becomes a reality to us, everything else becomes real; because everything becomes connected with God. Just as, on the other hand, whenever our prayers become shadowy and unreal, our life is sure to become shadowy and unreal also; because everything is broken off from God, and the flowers of our life, instead of growing flowers, cradles of fruits, and buds, become here gathered and perishing flowers stuck idly in a child's play-garden.

In the second place Maurice's stories and conversations had helped to show her the connection between herself and others, and how whatever she acquired or possessed might become riches to use for the pleasure and good of those she loved. In the third place she was growing older. And in the fourth place she had the new and inspiring delight of a companion.

Three times in the week she met Grace at a house in London, and Grace shared her lessons in German and in water-colors, and also occasionally received hints as to French from Rosalie, to Grace's intense delight; for she had a secret plan of life which she had never communicated to any one, until one day, in a moment of tender confidence, she entrusted her secret to Winnie. Grace hoped and prayed that she might one day be clever enough to be a daily governess, and to sell her drawings, so that Harry might be able to go to the university, and that her father's last days might be resting days.

But this was Grace's one great secret, which no

one in the world was to have a suspicion of until the time came, in return for which Winnie confided to Grace her own great secret—that if the lady in white glacé, threatened by Rosalie, failed to appear, she looked forward one day to living with Maurice at the parsonage, and keeping house for him.

On the other hand, Mrs. O'Brien had for some time been beginning to have an uneasy feeling that her life had hitherto been like a dream; that she had been living too much like the patients in a lunatic asylum, detached from all around her, wrapped up in a solitude of illusions.

And now she awoke to the sense that she was in a community. Not that she had been consciously living only for herself. Voices from the outside world had indeed, at times, penetrated into her inner world, as a patient in delirium can often be roused to a momentary consciousness by a direct appeal. At such times she had aroused herself, listened, understood, given what was asked, and then relapsed again into her life-dream. But now she was waking indeed, and began to feel that she was not the sole tenant of a world of her own, but a unit in a world of needy and suffering, struggling men, and women, and little children. And in the confusion of her half-waking thoughts she began to plunge vaguely hither and thither in search of something to do and somebody to help.

In this perplexity, one day when her physician Dr. Dee was paying one of his periodical visits, she remembered having heard that Mrs. Dee was a

very active and benevolent woman, and she resolved to seek an introduction.

"I have heard that Mrs. Dee is very useful and good," she said.

"I have heard so too, very often," was Dr. Dee's rather dry reply. "Six committees a week on an average. Letters enough for a foreign secretary. Our eldest daughter is indeed quite a private secretary. People have such a wonderful opinion of Mrs. Dee's judgment. No mere romance and sentiment with Mrs. Dee, but plain practical sense. Looks into cases herself. Wonderful dispatch of business. Scarcely an instant's leisure. Variety of work, Mrs. Dee says, is her repose. A noble sentiment—especially for angelic beings. To ordinary mortals sometimes a little overwhelming, Mrs. O'Brien. Even to me, I confess, at times, myself; but happily there are long distances between my patients sometimes, which are a rest and relaxation; a thing, of course, not to be expected in the house, with such an energetic and invaluable woman as Mrs. Dee. Not, however, I should think, much in your way," he concluded, with a dry little smile, as he glanced at the languid form half-reclining in the low chair before him.

"I think Mrs. Dee would do me good," said Mrs. O'Brien, timidly. "I wish I could know her."

"Mrs. Dee lives to do good," he replied. "No doubt she would be delighted, my dear Mrs. O'Brien, to include you among her cases, if you wish to call in further advice. Only, you understand, if the treatment is too severe, I am not

responsible. Mrs. Dee has inexhaustible energy—perfectly inexhaustible. She has no experience of fatigue—I mean subjectively—and no objective faith in nerves, not the slightest; considers them nothing but products of idleness and discontent: indeed, considers sickness and trouble in general quite a mistake, always to have been prevented if steadily resisted from the first, and always to be overcome by energy and judicious advice."

In spite of which warning, it was arranged that this invaluable lady should call the next day; and Mrs. O'Brien conscientiously prepared herself to go through a course of Mrs. Dee.

Mrs. Dee did not appear to consider her patient's case at all hopeless. Mrs. O'Brien was anxious to have something to do—"a most healthy symptom," said Mrs. Dee. And the world was in want of a great deal to be done. Most easy circumstances to adjust. The only difficulty was to discover what was Mrs. O'Brien's "speciality"; and this, of course, could only be ascertained by experiment—the soil being hitherto fruitless of crops of any kind which could determine its capabilities.

Mrs. Dee began with committees—one for foreign female missions, one for an orphan asylum, and one for a school. Mrs. O'Brien did not find the exertion demanded by this species of work at all an exorbitant demand on her energies, physical or intellectual. She drove to the appointed place of meeting, sat silently for two hours among a number of ladies, also either silent or occasionally engaged in indulging a few mild "asides;" while Mrs. Dee

and two or three other energetic ladies discussed and settled a number of things which the spectators then approved as a matter of course. Mrs. O'Brien's difficulty on these occasions was to persuade herself she was doing anything. Mrs. Dee assured her she was. She was giving her sanction. And it was most important that such good works should have the sanction of numbers, a consideration which, unhappily, did not satisfy Mrs. O'Brien, because, being naturally scrupulous and anxious, she felt considerably alarmed at giving her sanction to a quantity of mysterious proceedings which she could not fathom. And, moreover, she felt she had much rather have been in some way directly cheering the blind people in the asylum, or personally helping the children in the school, than indirectly setting some invisible machine in motion by sitting in a committee-room. But how to do this she had no clear idea. Once she had ventured on a faint effort at making acquaintance with the blind girls in the asylum, by means of little observations about their work; but the blind people were shy, and Mrs. O'Brien was shy, and a sympathetic remark addressed to one, with the consciousness that a room-full of quick ears were listening, seemed to Mrs. O'Brien an operation too painfully like public speaking to be pursued to any extent. If she had known one blind woman as a human link, it would have made all the difference. Similarly, on the occasions on which she had officially visited the school, the mistress, not to say the pupil-teachers, seemed to Mrs. O'Brien so much wiser than herself,

that she felt it quite a liberty even to offer any commendations.

At length she communicated these difficulties to Mrs. Dee, who was instantly ready with a remedy.

"Personal work? O yes, I see. You wish for personal work among the poor. By far the highest work, my dear Mrs. O'Brien; what I prefer myself, decidedly. But we must not choose. Some must be content to be pioneers and directors. I can accommodate you at once. A few months since I undertook a district in the east of London. I can introduce you, and hand it over to you at once. To-morrow I will bring you my book, and we will begin, if you like, on the spot."

Accordingly the book was brought, in which Mrs. Dee had classified the human beings living in her district. There were about a hundred families to be visited, so that personal acquaintance seemed to Mrs. O'Brien a thing difficult, at least, to acquire in a morning; but Mrs. Dee assured her that classification was everything; and to illustrate this, showed her the hundred human beings classified with as much decision and precision as substances in a treatise on chemistry.

"No. 1. Treherne. Green-grocer. Woman clean and independent, but apt to be violent. Objects to interference. Must be kept in her place. Six children. Go to Wesleyan school. Strong Dissenter; not open to conviction. Husband quiet and civil, but not easy to get at. He keeps out of the way."

"Do you call on the shopkeepers?" said Mrs.

O'Brien, in a startled manner. "I should never have ventured. I only thought of going to see the people who want help."

"Most people feel with you," was the reply; "but I never yield to prejudices. Everything I do, I do thoroughly. If I undertake a district, I undertake every house in it. If people don't want help, they always want advice; and if they don't like advice, that only shows they want it all the more. If they refuse to see me, of course that is their fault. I have delivered my conscience and they must take the responsibility."

And she proceeded with the book.

"No. 8. Two old maids, who call themselves the Miss Lovels, who keep what they term an 'Academy for Young Ladies.' (I did call there once; but the eldest sister looked like thunder, and said it must be a mistake, as they had not the pleasure of my acquaintance. A very ridiculous person. But I have not called again. I have no patience Mrs. O'Brien, with such wretched affectations of imitating the higher classes. I have a class of dressmakers and shop-girls, who call themselves young ladies; but I always make a point of calling them 'young persons' on every occasion)".

"Do they submit to it?" said Mrs. O'Brien.

"Those who come *must*," said Mrs. Dee. "Certainly the class has become very small; but that is not my fault. It is just like the contest which the missionaries in India had about caste."

"Only a little the other way, isn't it?" suggested Mrs. O'Brien, in some perplexity.

"I think," pursued Mrs. Dee, not heeding the interruption, "in these socialistic days, one of our chief duties in visiting the poor is to teach them their places. I have no idea of these petty distinctions; the little shopkeeper despising the honest day-laborer, and people like those Miss Lovels looking down on both. Indeed, I never miss an opportunity of showing how unscriptural these miserable little distinctions are."

"But," said Mrs. O'Brien, timidly, "do the people like it?"

"That is no affair of ours," was Mrs. Dee's reply, in the grand style. "We shall do little good, indeed, in the world if we are considering what people *like*."

Poor Mrs. O'Brien was silenced; but she began to think that "district-visiting" must be a very terrible ordeal indeed, if it was to be a course of driving over people's prejudices, and grinding them to a level. At length she ventured to say:

"But there are a good many distinctions, dear Mrs. Dee, even among people in our own position, which might seem petty from a still higher point of view. One would not quite like, for instance, to invite one's tailor to dinner; although," she pursued, apologizing to the imaginary tailor, "I have heard there are tailors living in the best style, with families very well educated. Yet it would not be quite liked, would it, if one asked one's friends to meet them?"

"Of course not, Mrs. O'Brien; the idea is an obvious absurdity. There always have been, and

always must be, *these* distinctions. But what has that to do with the poor and with district-visiting?"

"Oh, nothing, of course," said Mrs. O'Brien, retreating in confusion, and without the least intention of flinging a Parthian dart in her flight. "No doubt, nothing to do with it at all. Of course no one would ever think of making *us* into a district, and district-visiting us. I only meant I am afraid whether this is work I am fit for?"

"You will learn; you will gain courage and experience, my dear Mrs. O'Brien. Everything must have a beginning." And Mrs. Dee resumed the classification:

"No. 12. Anderson. Baker. Scotch. No children. Had two. Died ten years since. Woman very reserved. A bigoted Presbyterian. Spoke to her of the advantages of our inestimable liturgy. Said it might be very well for the *English*. Scotch terribly self-opinionated—and dirty. Remarked strongly on dust on her dressers. No family to put things out of order. House ought to be a model. Quite sullen. Seemed to think it a liberty!

"No. 16. Widow. Laundress. Consumptive daughter. Complains of neighborhood having changed, and customers left. Gave her a coal-ticket, and a tract on Contentment, and showed how far money can be made to go with management. Not so thankful as might be expected. (Would have preferred half-a-crown probably and no tract. But, above all, my dear Mrs. O'Brien, beware of pauperizing.)

"No. 18. Irishwoman. Drunken husband. Complains of bad health. Wretched room. Children not at school. Showed how impossible to have anything but bad health and drunken husband with such a miserable room. Left a sanitary tract. Explained why it is against our principles to help women with drunken husbands. Encourages vice. Cried, and seemed quite convinced.

"No. 19. Man out of work a fortnight. Three children. Complained of machinery. Could not make five shillings where used to earn a sovereign. Explained how machinery did good in the end, although inconvenient to some at first, and how the world must advance. Could not see it. Thought people must live. Civil, but ripe for socialism. Things going daily to pawnshop for food. Spoke strongly of evils of pawn system. No attempt at reply, but muttered, Children could not be let starve.

"No. 20. Mechanic. Broken arm. Infidel principles. Said there are so many religions, no knowing which is right. Showed he *ought* to know. Spoke of sin of infidelity. Showed what will be the end of infidels, and that no one does disbelieve except because they *wish* to disbelieve. Looked as if he could be insolent. Rather desperate case."

But by this time Mrs. O'Brien was so convinced of her incapacity for the task proposed to her, that she gathered courage decisively to break off the negotiations. It seemed to her as if this method of dealing with human beings would be removing oneself even further from them than by keeping

within the machinery of committee-rooms. Mrs. Dee's method of district-visiting seemed to her to transform the whole human race into a set of machines which had gone wrong, and were put under Mrs. Dee's charge to be rectified. And she shrank appalled from the task.

"Dear Mrs. Dee," said she, "I have so little experience, I really don't know in the least how to tell that poor widow the way to make her money go further. I am afraid I should never make it go half so far. I have not the least idea what to do if I saw the poor creatures wanting anything, except to help them to get it; and that, you say, would be interfering with the whole social system, and making paupers. So I think I had better wait till I see my way a little, and keep to the committees."

Mrs. Dee soon retired in a compassionate frame of mind, and Mrs. O'Brien wondered if she kept a district-book for "cases" in her own rank of life, to which she felt it her mission to "do good;" and if so, she pictured to herself some such entry as the following:

"O'Brien. Woman unmanageable. Troubled with 'nerves' and 'scruples.' Seems at first amenable to reason, but in reality full of a quiet, impermeable obstinacy. Resists every effort to put her in the right way. Spoke plainly to her on duty of saying disagreeable truths. Smiled, and was civil, but did not yield. Rather a desperate case."

Mrs. O'Brien had not yet found the links she was vaguely searching for. Perhaps there was another

link which needed riveting first. The connection with the fountain needs to be opened before the connection with the fields to be watered.

Perhaps she had yet to learn that the "Come unto me and drink" must always, at first and every day, precede the "flowing forth of the streams of living water." The being and becoming must come before the doing.

All these endeavors and conflicts had, it must be confessed, the immediate effect of making Mrs. O'Brien not quite such a serene companion for Winnie as she had been. Hitherto, when Winnie had done any lesson unusually well, she had always been sure of a sign of a rather languid approval, and an indulgent entreaty not to overtask herself. Now, frequently, when Mrs. O'Brien looked over her drawings, or heard her repeat German or French poetry, she would give a little sigh, and warn Winnie not to let *her* precious days of sowing pass by unused. And once or twice she was almost fretful with Winnie for not preparing her lessons in time; fretting being the nearest approach Mrs. O'Brien could make to scolding. "It is a sad thing," she said one day, "to have to be sowing in harvest-time. In our climate, at least, there are no second crops to be depended on." All which transformation bewildered Winnie not a little.

But what surprised and bewildered her far more was an interview she had one evening with Maurice. She had seen him coming up the lawn as she was writing an exercise at the library-window, and

bounding out of it, she had her hand in his in a moment. But there was something in his face which froze the histories she had to tell him on her lips. It was not that he looked displeased, or exactly sad, but pre-occupied. He seemed not to see her coming, when usually he met her with his looks such a long way off. And when she came close to him, although his face brightened for a moment, and his voice had its old tones of welcome, the brightness seemed to pass like a sunbeam flitting over a snowy landscape, and the lips were compressed, and the two furrows came back to his forehead.

Winnie crept closer to him and ventured to say at last, "Nothing is the matter with Dan, Maurice, or with Fan?"

He looked at her in wonder.

Then suddenly Winnie's great dread rushed irresistibly over her, she colored crimson, stopped, and said with a great gasp: "Don't mind telling me, Maurice. Don't be afraid; I can bear it. If the lady Rosalie talks about *is* coming, I had rather know at once, please, and I will try and love her; indeed I will." Then he wakened up entirely, and fixed his eyes full on Winnie, with a flash such as she had never seen in them. But he only said:

"That woman is too foolish, Winnie, she ought not to be allowed to talk such nonsense to a child like you. No lady is coming, or ever was, or ever is to be. And you must not let Rosalie take such liberties."

Very unlike Maurice, especially as only a week

since he had seemed rather to enjoy her telling him Rosalie's ideas about the white glacé and Brussels point. So he went hastily in at the library window, and Winnie followed, feeling as if mines were springing under her feet everywhere, bitterly reproaching herself for the great mistake she had unconsciously committed, and wondering what it was. Reproaching Maurice was a treason that never entered her loyal heart.

Maurice continued a few moments apparently absorbed in Winnie's exercise, and then looking up, he said cheerily in his own ordinary tone:

"*You* are to be my little woman in white, little sister, and you can tell Rosalie so the next time she perplexes you on the subject."

"Oh, Maurice!" she said, "are you really in earnest?"

He was quite startled when he looked down on the little flushed face, so eager and intense was the expression, the great earnest eyes watching for his answer as if it had been a sentence of life or death.

"Mean to bury you in a dreadful den of bricks and mortar," he said, with a slight bitterness, as if he were making a quotation, "not unless you like, and papa and mamma like, which is very doubtful."

"Oh, papa and mamma have Alick, and Jamie, and Allan, and the baby," she said; "besides, of course, I do not mean until I am quite wise, and old, and fit; and then every one will be grown up, and of course I can be spared."

"But what if you should be a little woman in white on your own account before that time comes?"

"I!" exclaimed Winnie indignantly, "when I might stay with you, Maurice, instead! But," she concluded, with a sudden flash of suspicion, "Grace never told you, did she? It is your own thought."

"Told me what?"

"How I wished it. Because it was my secret, Maurice, and I never told any one but Grace. Was it your very own thought, Maurice; and do you really mean it?"

"I should like nothing better in the world," he said, rather sadly, "but we must not be too eager in making plans."

"Grace says we must not make cares, but she thinks we may make plans, especially if we make them into prayers."

"But God who loves us has also plans for us, and knows best, Winnie," he said, very gently, "and then if we have been too eager in our plans, it is not always so easy to take His instead, and be pleased with them."

But she was too overfilled with delight to take the check, although there was something in his manner which prevented her talking to him any more about it.

That evening Winnie thanked God in the depths of her heart that he had given her the wish of her heart.

She little knew at what a cost to Maurice.

She little knew that what to her was the threshhold of a new world of living hopes, was to him the gravestone of a whole world of buried hopes.

For he also had had visions of a radiant presence which was to brighten his dingy East End parsonage into something better than a palace, and but yesterday he had found they were no prophetic visions, but simply dreams.

It had happened that in a country curacy which he had held for a few months, the old manor-house was occupied by a Mr. and Mrs. Denison and one daughter, Minna Denison. She was not an only daughter. The old halls had echoed to the wedding festivities of three of her sisters; three brothers were scattered far and wide through the land, and she, the youngest, had inherited the love of all the six. To her parents she was a sort of combined child and grandchild. Her father marvelled at her quaint little sayings as he had when she had been "baby." Her mother received the capricious little caressings, with which she won her own way, as proofs of an impulsive but sensitive heart. Her brothers, if sometimes they saw through her little wiles, thought them delightfully feminine, especially as they were very frequently exercised on their behalf, and had rescued them from sundry scrapes from boyhood upward. Her sisters, being some years older, petted her nearly as much as their own children; and the children, catching the family infection, considered Aunt Minna the model of beauty and the perfection of kindness; except when her pleasures happened to cross theirs, on which occasions they found themselves in the most inexplicable and endearing manner, charmed out of Annt Minna's way. And finally she herself entirely

agreed with all her admirers, and was far too securely enthroned in her own and other people's good graces to be guilty of an uneasy self-assertion. If individuals (or nations) are extraordinarily addicted to self-laudation, it is generally to be concluded that they are not so absolutely convinced of their superiority as they wish others to be. Boastings are very often only the conclusions of an internal argument in self-defense. In Minna's mind there was no conflict of this kind, and thus she was free to acknowledge every one else's excellences, and to sympathize with every one's sentiments and tastes. With *opinions* she concerned herself little. "Women," she said, "like the rest of the inferior animals, are always really guided by instinct." For one of Minna's "sentiments" was the enthronization of everything masculine, of the lesser throne for the queen consort she had no idea; woman's place, she considered, was the footstool. The old Greek ideal of Hector and Andromache was not hers, nor the Saxon ideal of lord and lady, nor the old Christian ideal of "service," nor the old Teutonic ideal of the Hausmutter, nor the old Divine ideal of the "help-meet;" but a transcendental combination of Oriental, mediæval, and Celtic ideas, passionate adoration, "*le besoin de se dévouer*," from the heights of which she looked supremely down on women's books, women's music, women's opinions, and all feminine things in general except herself.

Unlike little Grace Leigh, Minna Denison's favorite books counted their age by days and months, scarcely by years, certainly not by decades; if, in-

deed, any one could be said to have favorite books who never read any book more than once.

So Minna grew to eighteen, prepared, as she believed, for unlimited self-sacrifice, when the true object of adoration should appear, and meantime mingling the incense of her own admiration with that offered to her from all around her, with no more conception that the world or self was her object in life, than Maurice Bertram had, when he fell in love with her. She worldly? Had she not refused the best marriage in the county? She selfish, who caressed her mother and amused her father, and mediated for her brothers, and indulged her nephews and nieces, and had bewitching smiles for every old woman and little child in the country; and was prepared for that heroic life whenever the call should come? If she found pleasure in all these sweet ways of hers, it was because of the inherent sweetness of her nature. If she had a way of escaping doing everything that was unpleasant, of leaving the tiresome visits, and the tiresome letters, and all dealings with poor people who were cross or unpleasant, or with friends who were bores, or with children who were fretful, to her mother or sisters, who could wonder at "that poor tender-hearted child" avoiding such things? She felt everything so much more than others! And besides, when the hour came, was she not prepared for martyrdom? Thus Minna Denison was among that most dangerous class of impostors who first impose on themselves.

And Maurice Bertram, coming fresh from the

university to the parish in which she lived, fell into the ranks of her captives at once, and walked humbly in the "Trionfo de Madonna Minna." She, on her part, was not without interest in him. She had heard of his confronting storms on the snowy moors, and encountering infectious diseases in visiting the sick; and she, who never voluntarily encountered a cold blast or a storm, admired this in him, and showed him the way to one or two cottages, where old dependents of her family welcomed her as something between a nursling and an angel. She read the books he lent her with a delicate appreciation which amazed him, illogical and unintellectual as she always declared herself to be; and then she always had some delicious little difficulty in them which she was sure Mr. Bertram could solve. She entered into his enthusiastic plans for helping and raising his fellow-creatures with a penetrating sympathy which made him feel as if they had been in her heart before they were in his; and Minna very nearly believed the same. Much of her fascination lay in the faculty she had of living for the time in the part she was playing. If she had been an actress by profession (instead of being only one by nature) when she represented Queen Constance, no doubt the stage Prince Arthur would have felt her hot tears upon his cheek.

Occasionally Maurice wished she had been a little less mediæval in her tastes; but it was not from "opinion" of any kind that the little library where she spent most of her time was fitted up with ivory crucifixes and marble madonnas, and with one great

pathetic wooden crucifix from Nuremberg, which, after a suggestion from Maurice as to its terrible truth, he found a few days afterwards tenderly veiled in transparent muslin. Minna was not High Church, nor Low Church, nor Broad Church, nor anything angular or defined of any kind. She "assisted" at an altar more ancient and more universal than any Church parties. She had only "sweet child-like yearnings after all that was beautiful and true." How could a creature with those delicious dreamy brown eyes, which rested on you with a sweet childish unconsciousness, and then sank vailed under the long lashes, quite unaware that they had pierced into your heart; and those delicate, childlike lips, with smiles like a child's playing on them, and that hair of true auburn, which was not a color merely, but golden light and soft shade, help having sympathy with everything that was lovely, whether pre-Raphaelite, Papal, or Pagan?

So it happened that Maurice loved Minna Denison, and loving her, believed her to be Andromache, and Una, and Miranda, and Wordsworth's "Perfect Woman," and Elaine, and Enid, and the Princess—and every ideal of perfect womanhood in one; and yet not a mere combination of perfections, but herself, Minna Denison, the best of all, with all kinds of delicious and charming imperfections of her own, on account of which she was to be cherished, and shielded, and guarded with the whole strength of his heart all her life long, if she would only suffer it so to be. And being a man

vowed to a high calling, he was also persuaded that in loving Minna Denison he was making the wisest, most deliberate, and most beneficent choice he could make, for which all future generations of his future parishioners would have cause to bless him.

So, after a few months in the parish of Beechlands, he departed for his curacy in the manufacturing districts, persuaded that Minna Denison thought it the noblest work in the world to live to ennoble and Christianize the great patient working-classes; and also persuaded that she must know, although he had not spoken, how entirely his heart was hers. In which last persuasion he was probably right.

Two years passed in this manufacturing town—years of hard, patient work, of many disappointments, and of some most precious successes—inspired to Maurice, next to the heavenly love and duty which truly held the divine place in his heart—by that sweet human hope (earthly he would not call it), of a home one day to be blessed by that gentle radiant presence. Twice during those years he saw her, and she seemed always equally interested to hear of his work, whether from the royal graciousness with which she entered into the interests of all, or from a deeper feeling, he could not tell. Then came the gift of the living in the east of London. He accepted it, made acquaintance with it, and went at once to Beechlands.

He met Minna in the wood between the lodge and the house. He spoke to her with trembling eagerness of his new home. She said it was a no-

ble self-sacrifice, but very terrible, she was afraid. If it had been among those fine fishermen in Cornwall, or among the manly intelligent mechanics of the north, or even among the New Zealanders or Brahmins, it might have been easier, but Cockneys (she said the word hesitatingly) were a little too trying, were they not?

Then he plunged into his declaration, and told her all she might be—what an angel to the poor, what unutterable help and joy to him, what an inspiration the thought of her had been to him. She listened composedly, a little troubled, a good deal perplexed, and at last, when he ceased, she answered him in the truest words she had ever spoken:

"Mr. Bertram, I am very sorry, but I am afraid we have misunderstood each other. I have no idea of practical work, not the least. I should be quite lost in district visiting and Sunday-schools, and all that kind of thing. In a general way, of course, nothing can be nobler than such a life. But I have no head for details. I should be dreadfully in your way. I assure you, you would very soon agree with me; and besides, poor dear papa and mamma, what would they say? It would be cruel to mention it."

"Miss Denison," he said, bent on knowing the worst, "would it make any real difference if I could change my home? Is it the place you shrink from, or is it the work, or is it more than that?"

"How can I define and divide things so precisely," she said a little pettishly. "You know," she added, with a little pleading look, "I never could

manage to analyze things; I always see things and people blended together, I cannot separate. I assure you, Mr. Bertram, I shall always think with the greatest interest of your work, but I am quite unworthy to share it. Indeed you must not think any more of it."

There was something in the little perplexed yet decided manner which spoke more to him than her words. She seemed scarcely so much pained even as vexed. He was quite sure she was too good and generous to have really cared what the work was if she had one grain of real affection for him. With a man more worthy of her, more able to have won and satisfied her, she would have been equal to anything, he was sure. It was not the London parish or the homely duties of the clergyman's wife she rejected, it was simply himself. He felt it would have been unmanly, and indeed impossible to have urged one other plea. So he very quietly wished her good-bye, and turned back to the lodge.

"You will come to the house," she said, "my father and mother would be sorry if you did not rest."

"Thank you, I think I had better not."

"I shall always be interested to hear of your work," she said, giving him her hand. He took it for an instant, and went away.

"She has not cared enough for me," he thought, "for me even to have been a cloud on her path." But he never thought she had trifled with him; he never lowered the thought of her for a moment in his heart.

Minna meantime returned to the house, and that

evening she contemplated herself and pitied herself a great deal, and wrote in her diary (for at that time she had been keeping a diary for ten days—a diary with a golden lock and key, and bound in purple velvet): "I am capable of great things. I feel it. But it must be under great inspirations. A life of self-sacrifice would be like my native element to me. I should breathe for the first time freely in it, but it must be self-sacrifice for great ends, in a noble field. Contact with what is low and mean and morally ugly would paralyze me. There must either be the inspiration of a great love or a great object." Having performed this little act of inward self-contemplation to her satisfaction, Minna closed and locked her diary, and entered on another phase of the sacred rites of her shrine, by ocularly contemplating herself in the glass. The luxuriant waving auburn hair was floating around her white throat—framing the brilliant yet delicately colored face, and as she looked into the soft depths of the brown eyes which met her, she concluded, "It was very unreasonable. An East London parsonage for me! To knit stockings, I suppose, for old women; and on Sundays to teach dirty little set-up London children, who call each other 'Miss,' and would try to copy my bonnets; and to keep accounts of clothing societies, details that would annihilate me." Minna's "great objects" were always to be reached, not by little successive steps, but by soaring to the stars, or by precipitating ourself into chasms, or by some other mythological process equally uncommon.

"He could not really have loved me to think of it." He could surely have found some worthier home, or he might have asked me to choose before he accepted that wretched living! No, that is not what I call love," concluded Minna; "I am ready to sacrifice anything, but then it must be for one who would sacrifice anything for me." And having thus worked herself up to the right devotional point of self-admiration and self-pity, she laid down the censer for the occasion, and concluded the service by going through, in a formal and official manner, those other antique rights to that Supreme and Unapproachable Essence which is said to be recognized in most idolatrous systems of religion; although, since nothing is expected from It, consequently as little as possible is rendered to It.

Maurice reached his despised East London parsonage that evening. In the morning when he had set out, he had persuaded himself that the trees in the church-yard gave it almost a cheerful look, that the rooms were not so very dingy after all, but that affection might make them bright even for a creature so choice as Minna Denison.

In the evening when he came back, the old church-yard trees creaked and strained like trees already half stiffened into mere timber, as if they were croaking, "We sprang from graves and we are fast growing into coffins. How could you think of bringing any bright living creature under our shadow?"

And within the house, all the rooms had shrunk into a mere place to eat and find shelter in. There

was no welcome and no fire, for he was not expected; and he would not have any meal prepared.

He sat down in the library and mechanically took up a book he had left there in the morning—a volume of old poems which he had once lent Minna. Beside it lay a heap of reports, and some notes for a sermon. Very prosaic everything looked. And he did not wonder at Minna's decision. He only wondered at his own presumption.

How dull, and mean, and characterless the opposite houses and the narrow street looked the next morning; how endless and sunless the work that had to be done. The sunshine seemed to have passed from his life—the sun to have shrunk from a radiant "strong man rejoicing to run his race," to a round red ball, to light up the world of counting-houses and committees.

Only "seemed;" for the radiance of the true Sun of Maurice's life was no transitory halo. It was the fog obscuring the rays which was transitory.

But he had to learn the hard lesson of discerning how much of the light of his heart and life had come from earth, and how much from heaven; an analysis not to be accomplished by any instrument which cannot divide asunder the joints and marrow; never by any instrument except in divine hands; and never in divine hands without pain.

Terribly humbling he found the lesson. In the darkness, the tempter does not fail to draw near, to insinuate his poisoned arrows of doubt into the wounds made by the searching arrows of the Almighty. And in the darkness and the anguish too

often with frantic hands the sufferer, seeking to staunch the wounds which are to cure, only rivets the darts which are destroying.

Maurice's doubts were all about himself. He never for an instant doubted Minna's goodness and truth. "If he had thought she felt anything more than an ordinary interest in him, it had been only his wretched vanity misinterpreting the kindly sympathy she showered on all alike. If he had thought her purposes high enough for any self-sacrifice in a noble cause, he had been right. Only on another level than his, and with worthier help. She was capable of sacrificing anything, but not for him." He did not suffer a shadow to dim her image in his inmost heart. "She was gentle, and noble, and lowly; beautiful and sound to the heart's core. How could he have dreamt of her loving him?—one so weak and wavering that at the first crossing of his foolish hopes and dreams, all seemed to have become unreal to him, and he scarcely dared stand up and preach to the people Glad Tidings which had so little power to make him glad."

But the Gospel was true! He had no doubt of that, however little share he had in it; God's love was true, however little he could rejoice in it—it was true that there was One now in heaven who had lived and died on earth, and had redeemed men, however little that redemption had set him free; it was true there was One now on earth ready to abide in the hearts of men, Sanctifier and Comforter, however little that holy Presence had consecrated his heart.

And being convinced it was true, and that men's souls needed this truth, he decided that it was no hypocrisy for him to stand up and preach it; but a duty, whether he felt it or not. And accordingly the next Sunday he stood up and spoke of the great facts no feelings can change, the great miracles of Divine love no flight of ages can remove to a distance.

And those who listened had no suspicion that the calm, strong words, spoken with such conviction, came from a heart that could itself rise to no experience beyond, "Have mercy on me." For that day and many days he went as usual on his errands of mercy to the sick and dying. The living waters *existed*, and had been opened; and if the hand that lifted them to the thirsty lips was itself parched with fever, still the draught it bore was life-giving and pure, and from time to time refreshment flowed back to his own heart from those to whom he brought it.

But the conflict was long and bitter. His own conversion to God had been simple and joyous, like a child awakened on a sunny morning by a mother's kiss, like the spirit of the damsel called with a mother's word of endearment, a "Talitha Cumi," to open her eyes on the Saviour's face. And his life had been bright. His tastes were high, and Christianity had from the first so possessed his heart as the Beautiful as well as the True, that between his tastes and his faith there had been no repulsion. Outward temptations he had known, but with a healthy intellect, and a health-giving

because joyful religion, he had known little of temptations within.

And now, in this hour of crushed hopes, they came; fiery darts falling thick, and striking home. When he *knew* them, indeed, he had a shield which could ward them off. When, on questionings of his own honesty and worthiness, followed low, bitter murmurs about the goodness and truth of God, such as, "Is this the end of so many prayers for guidance? What would have been the difference if I had not prayed?" he was at no loss to repel *these*. "God *is* good; and prayer is a reality." But when it fell back to, "Are *thy* prayers realities? Is 'goodness' or 'severity' the due of one whose fancied heavenly joys all fade before the fading of an earthly hope?" he did not always recognize the hand which threw them, but bowed over the poisonous shaft, and with his own hand often fixed it in.

It was not until after many days that he came out of the battle; and then it was with a sense of weakness and deep humiliation rather than with a sense of victory, with many scars, and with the pangs of some wounds scarcely healed; but with the heavenly armor fitted on as only battles fit it; with a conviction of the existence of the tempter, and a sympathy with the tempted; with a faith in the victory of the Saviour, and in the presence of the other "Comforter," such as he had scarcely known before, yet which is sorely needed by those who have to be leaders as well as soldiers in the fight.

Chapter VII.

"AUNT KATHARINE proposes to pay us a visit next week," said Mrs. O'Brien one morning at that daily rendezvous with distant friends which the Penny Post establishes at many breakfast tables.

Mrs. O'Brien's tone was a little ambiguous. Lady Katharine Wyse was one of the people who reserve to themselves that right of speaking their minds which is seldom enjoyed (however it may be appreciated) by the recipient of such franknesses. Her visits had therefore been regarded by her niece rather in the same light as those clear, hard frosts which every one says are so wholesome, and which every one appreciates so highly when they are over. Her natural enemies were all "shams," and her natural idol was "effectiveness." She did not perhaps always distinguish correctly between inconsistency and insincerity, or recognize the danger of the epithets "hypocrite," "fool," or "blind," or their equivalents, issuing from any lips but those of the All-seeing and All-merciful.

Energetic, warm-hearted, accustomed to rule, and to rule well, she had no tolerated rummage corner for any crotchets either of her own or of other people's. During her husband Mr. Wyse's life she had reigned by deputy, and since in person. Her two sons (she could not think why) preferred having their own establishments at some little distance from the ancestral house at Combe Monachorum, although their annual visits were the delight of the children of both families, as well as of the old servants at the Abbey. But daughters-in-law she acknowledged were "proverbially difficult to get on with." Her eldest son was persuaded of his mother's wisdom in managing the estates, and preferred a residence in London, and maintaining the relation of host and guest with his mother to the complications of a co-agency; displacing Lady Katharine from the throne was an achievement not to be contemplated. Her reign had now extended to half a century, from the day when she was brought, a bride of seventeen, under triumphal arches of greenery to the family home of three hundred years of the Wyses. From that time she had adopted her husband's place and ancestry as her own. The Abbey had fallen to the lot of the ancestors of the Wyses as a reward for naval victories over the Spaniards in the days of the Armada. She taught her sons that the titles of her own family, dating from a party political struggle in one of the early Brunswick reigns, were of small account beside the untitled dignities of the Wyses, which could be traced back to the grand old Elizabethan

times. One of Elizabeth's esquires, it was her theory, was beyond all comparison nobler than any of the Georgian nobility. Prizes won in the race with the Sidneys, and Drakes, and Frobishers, she said, were worth twenty peerages dropping from the heavy indiscriminating hands of the Hanoverians. And besides that, she maintained that the Wyses had a right to the field on which they won their spurs before Hanoverians, or Tudors, or Plantagenets, appeared above the horizon. The Maiden Queen had indeed apportioned to them the forfeited lands of the monks; but before a Benedictine had come with cowl and vows and Gregorian tones to claim the broad meadows of Combe Monachorum for the Church, the Wyses had held their own at the old manor of Combe Regis at the head of the same valley. Lady Katharine inspired the loyalty of her sons by more than one royal name. Elizabeth had given the baronetcy, which had afterwards lapsed; but she loved to trace the fortunes of the Wyses to Alfred, the darling of his people, to whom she considered, if to any monarch or saint in England, a national holiday ought to have been dedicated; Combe Regis having been, tradition said, one of his royal villas, given by him to an ancestor of the Wyses for services against the Danes.

The fifty years of Lady Katharine's sway had witnessed many changes in the neighborhood. She had seen the rise and progress, she averred, of a whole crop of new families, and of at least two schools of opinion in the church. It was astonish-

ing, she said, at what a variety of comparative ecclesiastical levels she had found herself by the simple process of standing still.

Lady Katharine's proposals were as imperative in the family as any royal invitations, and on the next week accordingly she arrived at the Cedars. She was not noisy, nor fussy, nor demonstrative, but her presence was always rather like that of a wind. Nothing stagnated around her. Nothing could lie safely in corners, sure of being let alone. Nothing could hide itself hazily in mists without giving an account of itself. She had a faculty of making people find out what they meant and what they did not mean; and if they did not mean anything, of finding out *that*, which is almost as important a discovery. To her earth was earth, and sky was sky, and clouds were clouds, namely, "water in the form of vapor," which either had to descend in rain, or to diffuse itself and disappear, or, at the worst, to manifest itself as fog; but was by no means to confuse people into the idea it was either an earthly mountain or a heavenly city. To Mrs. O'Brien, who had spent so much of her life in cloudland hitherto, three very unpleasant alternations. Now, however, that she desired to become a dweller on the common earth, the chasm between herself and Lady Katharine seemed far less impassable.

On the evening of Lady Katharine's arrival, there was a dinner-party, at which were present Winnie's old perplexity, Mr. Vernon, and Mr. Weldon, the curate of the parish.

The conversation before dinner fell on the subject of sermons. Mr. Vernon was of opinion that the clergy were in general a very harmless and well-disposed body of men, and only became dangerous for an hour or two on Sundays in the pulpit. He thought it would be a final remedy for all our ecclesiastical difficulties if sermons were abolished altogether, or at all events if the congregation generally dispersed after the prayers, and left the clergyman to deliver a confidential oration to such of his parishioners as had a taste for that rather obsolete pastime.

Mr. Weldon thought that it was a sign of the decided progress of Catholic feeling that preaching was being dethroned from the pre-eminence which the Reformation had given it, and was being subordinated to the higher sacerdotal functions of the clergy. An ominous smile, boding mischief, might have been seen in Lady Katharine's face; but she did not enter the lists, and there the matter might have dropped had it not been Mr. Weldon's fate to be her neighbor at dinner, and his misfortune to believe that he had to entertain a dignified and mildly-disposed elderly lady.

"It is rather a remarkable symptom of the times," he began, "to see men of such variety of character agreeing in the opinion Mr. Vernon expressed."

"Do you think so?" she said. "It seems to me, from my limited observation, that there always are a certain number of opinions which people in general agree in, that is, people belonging to the same set and the same generation. The remarkable thing

is when any one does *not* agree with them. Yet it really does not need much courage to differ, at least not any very continued exercise of courage. In about twenty years the tide turns; and then you find the same remarkable unanimity of opinion on the other side."

"You do not agree with Mr. Vernon, then," was the rejoinder.

"Not agree with Mr. Vernon in thinking sermons tiresome?" she said. "I cannot say I have been entirely without experience of the kind. But in general we do not confide these little difficulties to the clergy. They might think it discourteous. My difference with Mr. Vernon is not so much as to the fact as to the remedy."

Mr. Weldon began to have an uneasy feeling that he had lighted on a dangerous character, possibly some relic of antique Puritanism.

At length he said mildly:

"There can surely be little doubt as to the remedy, can there? The country seems awakening to it in all directions. In almost every parish you see restored churches where the huge pulpit has been broken up, and replaced by a modest reading-stand, leaving the aisle clear to the altar. The change is typical, is it not? People are beginning to understand that we do not meet to listen to a preacher, but to worship God."

"Excuse me," said Lady Katharine, "I think we go to church for two purposes: to adore, and to be taught. The Liturgy and the Lessons are no substitute, it seems to me, for a bad sermon, although

they may be an antidote. The only remedy for bad preaching, it seems to me, is to make it better. The church ought to be not only a temple of worship but a school of divine instruction. To the educated it may matter comparatively little, but to the uneducated it appears to me sermons are and ought to be the most effective teaching they have. I can conceive of no nobler sphere of influence than the pulpit ought to be. To stand up for an hour, or half an hour (I confess I think half an hour is better), and speak to some hundreds of people, who must listen whether they like it or not, of all it most concerns them to hear about; to pierce people's disguises and excuses, with plain, faithful words about God and right and wrong—with such histories as the Bible gives you, and such promises, and such precepts to unfold; the calling seems to me the grandest on earth! And I cannot bear to hear it undervalued. The people never do undervalue it," she concluded; "and if they have cold, neat, little essays in church, they go to the Wesleyans, or the Baptists, or anywhere where they can find what they think stirs them up and helps them, or teaches them, and leave the aisle to your beautiful new altar very open and untrodden indeed."

"No doubt," said Mr. Weldon; "the natural result, you must allow me to say, of the system they have been trained in. They have been taught to consider preaching everything, and to consider the test of preaching not its power to calm, but to excite. And if they do not find stimulants excit-

ing enough at church, they go to schismatics to obtain them. The calming influences which this restless age needs, are precisely what it despises. And as the novelty of each fresh stimulant is exhausted, the congregation splits to seek a stronger."

"I must admit," said Lady Katharine, "our congregations are certainly too respectable to *split*. They certainly disappear. But whether this process says more for our cohesive force I scarcely know. Solid bodies split with an explosion, liquid substances trickle away with a murmur, fluids evaporate without any disturbance at all. Our congregations in city and country occasionally seem to be subject to the last mode of dispersion. The lower classes, who are apt, you know, to generalize rather roughly seem to require something positive to be done either for them or to them, when they go to church. The Roman Catholics persuade the congregations that something very positive is done for them in the Sacrifice of the Mass and the intercession of the priest. And you will find plenty of poor people in their churches. There are, on the other hand, some sermons which uneducated people consider do a great deal of good *to* them. They feel rebuked, consoled, cheered, instructed, their hearts warmed, their minds, as they think, enlightened. They call what does this the Gospel; and where this is to be found, you will find again crowds of the poor. I think these facts worth considering. And I believe all parties are beginning to consider them more and more."

"Extremes always attract the masses," said Mr.

Weldon. "Are they not always wavering between the counter-excitements of '*spectacles*' and demagogues?"

Lady Katharine's eye kindled.

"In the New Testament," she said in a low voice, "the words 'common people' and 'multitude' are used instead of 'mobs' or 'masses.' And it is said 'He had compassion on the multitudes,' and the 'common people heard him gladly.'" After which remark, and a brief pause, Lady Katharine and the curate gradually glided into deeper and calmer waters.

The next morning at breakfast Lady Katharine said penitently to Mr. O'Brien:

"Cecil, my dear, I am afraid I was very fierce with Mr. Weldon yesterday. I am naturally tempted to be savage with young curates. Sufferings do make people savage, unless they are great saints; and we have suffered at Combe. The rector, you know, is old, and there has been a constant succession of curates getting 'titles' out of our unhappy congregation. There was one whose father was a good man I have a great respect for, a small shopkeeper and a Dissenter in our county town, who tried my good manners extremely by knowing no human being intimately out of the peerage, and no sections of Christians below the level of the highest and latest Anglicanism. Then there was a prophet who considered that the one great embodiment of sin was the Church of Rome, which he denounced in terms which (as there have

been no papists for three centuries in our parish) seemed to the farmers very correct, no doubt, as to doctrine, but not sufficiently practical as regarded sheep-stealers and other practical sinners of the parish, and also rather strong language for the young people to hear. Then, afterwards we had two or three useful, humble-minded men, who were called off very soon to larger spheres. And lately a young philosopher of a very advanced school has been informing us that the Bible in general, although as a collection of interesting documents of high authority, and an expression of the devout aspirations of all ages, undoubtedly much to be respected, is nevertheless full of the most obvious mistakes and misstatements from beginning to end; although I am happy to say his language also is so 'advanced' and indefinite that I do not think any one in the church understood more from his sermons than that he is a very clever young gentleman, who, on the shoulders of certain wise men on the Continent, has climbed far above the heads of all the people whom, in old days, we used to be taught to look up to. And the worst of it is, that each one of these young people has not an idea that there is an opinion any intelligent man can hold for an instant except his own. My only comfort is, that sometimes after a few years I have found these very men softened and smoothed into sober-minded vicars, with nothing at all particular in their opinions; and that in the cottages, where they come into contact with the troubled, and sick, and dying, I have found that frequently these peculiar

opinions have dropped off from them like an outside cloak, and they have taken refuge in a few very simple truths and facts out of the old Bible. However, the curates and I have had so many combats that I know I am not safe with the species. I have no doubt they think me a very positive and bigoted old woman; yet I flatter myself we have done each other a little good now and then, and we generally part better friends than we meet."

Winifred had been gazing with wide-open, earnest eyes at Lady Katharine while she was speaking, and after breakfast she crept to her side and whispered softly:

"Please, Aunt Katharine, don't be fierce with Mr. Leigh. He is coming to-day with Grace, and he is very gentle, and rather timid, I think."

"Who is Mr. Leigh, my pet?"

"Mr. Leigh is Grace's father, and Grace is my friend, Aunt Katharine; and he is a curate, but I don't think he can help it. And he is not young, Aunt Katharine; his hair is gray."

"A gray-haired curate is a very different phenomenon, Winnie," she said, laughing, "from any of my foes. I promise you I will not be at all fierce, but be on my best behavior. He must be a very sensible man, moreover, to have called his little girl Grace, instead of Etheldreda or Radegunda, or some of the various names which are being disinterred from the calendars in these days to perplex old-fashioned people like me. I will be as civil as I can to Mr. Leigh, Winnie, I assure you, and to little Grace also."

Winifred was relieved. And in another hour she saw Mr. Leigh's tall, stooping figure moving slowly up the pathway across the lawn, conducted by Maurice, while little Grace was lingering a little behind, looking round at the view. Winnie was at her side in an instant, and leading her by the hand to introduce her to Mrs. O'Brien.

Winnie, in her eagerness to make the most of her friend, was far more confused and shy than Grace, who, after quietly looking up and meeting Mrs. O'Brien's gentle kind eyes, seemed to feel quite at home. There was something in the soft voices, the easy unaffected manners, and the general tone of things around her, in which little Grace seemed to float into her element at once. And Lady Katharine's reception of Mr. Leigh was in Winifred's opinion unexceptionable. She received him with a kind of gentle deference, as she might a prince in exile; like some one she had heard often about and had wished to know. She spoke to him of his Grace and of her little niece, and in a few minutes established countless fine little links between them, and shed a kindly sunshine around her, which quietly divested Mr. Leigh of his cloak of shyness, and made him expand into a freedom of intercourse he had known little of since his old college days.

Meantime Grace, considering her father in good keeping, was conducted by Winnie through all her treasures, her books, her photographs, her garden; Grace admiring, and Winnie perplexing her generous little heart to devise by what means she might

transfer the greater portion of her possessions to her friend, without taking the position of a benefactress and seeming to assume that Grace's home was deficient in anything.

But either Winnie was a poor diplomatist, or Grace was very impenetrable, for not one natural opening could be found through which to insert a present. At length, as usual with her, Winnie abandoned *finesse*, and rushed at her point.

"Please, Grace, will you choose? I can't think what you would like best, and I should like you to take everything. I have no paintings of my own, you know, like the one you gave me. But won't you tell me which of these photographs or books you like? They are quite my very own; and I should be so much obliged if you would take them for your very own."

Grace looked perplexed. Possession was altogether a new light for her to contemplate things in.

"How kind you are," she said. "But I really do not want anything. It is such a pleasure to see the things. I never think of having things. When one looks at things, really beautiful things I mean, one does seem to have them for one's very own. When I shut my eyes to-night I shall see all this lovely garden, and the woods, and the water, and the beautiful blue distant hills again, and the pictures, just as I shall see you; and I do not think they would be more like my own for having them at home. I am so much obliged! But you know we have not very much room; and Mrs. Treherne is sometimes a little particular about there being 'heaps of things about, as she says."

"But things are not your own, by looking at them," rejoined Winnie; not quite sure whether Grace was talking what Maurice called metaphysics, or whether she had confused notions of property. "You cannot look at them again whenever you like.

"But," said Grace, "one cannot have everything to look at again whenever one likes. So I like always to look well at things, and have them for one's own in that way. Just as the stars, and the sun and the moon, and the rivers and the trees, are one's own, or any person one loves."

Winnie was not convinced.

"The moon is one thing," she replied in plain Anglo-Saxon, "and a photographic album is another. Of course no one can have the moon; but I should think it so kind, Grace, if you would take my album. Please do. I always manage things in such a blundering way," she concluded. "Rosalie says I do."

And to pacify her friend, Grace accepted two photographs from Ary Scheffer, and having accepted them, tasted the delight of possession at once, and cheered Winnie's heart by saying:

"They will look lovely on the chimneypiece by Canova's Night and Morning. I am so little used to having things," she added, coloring a little. "Father not being very rich, and Mrs. Treherne being particular. And whenever one begins, you know one must stop somewhere, even if one were the Queen. I mean one must stop *having*, and one might always go on *wishing*; so perhaps it is just as well to stop wishing at the beginning as after-

wards. And don't you think," she concluded, "that *looking* will be the way we shall *have* things in heaven?—looking and loving?"

"What do you mean?" said Winnie softly.

"I mean that in heaven of course everything will be God's really. We shall not have our little bits of property shut up in houses there, and yet it will be all really *ours* too, more than anything can be on earth; because we shall always be able to look at all the glorious things, and because He is our Father, and heaven is our Father's house; and looking and loving does seem the most like heaven, and the best way really to have things even now."

"But we are not in heaven, and here people really want many things," said Winnie, meditatively. "It would not have made little Fan less hungry, you know, to look at a loaf of bread, would it? Rather more I think. And, oh, Grace," she continued, "are you really going to teach little Fan to sew?"

Which led to a long conversation, where Winnie, not being a person of mystical tendencies, felt more at home than in any theories of possessing the world "by right of eye."

It was a long happy day. There were games on the lawn, in which it was Winnie's delight to initiate Grace and Mr. Leigh; and at Winnie's especial request, there was early tea in the rock garden.

And there were strollings about the garden, and confidential conversations, in which Mrs. O'Brien

and Lady Katharine made little Grace's acquaintance.

Mrs. O'Brien was strangely attracted by the gentle child, and took her to show her the new fernery, with delicate tropical ferns growing around a fountain springing from a basin of Majolica china, which made the delicate fronds tremble and sparkle in its spray, with which Grace was enchanted, considering it like fairy land. In the course of conversation Grace happened to mention the name of Mrs. Treherne, which recalled to Mrs. O'Brien Mrs. Dee's book of classified human beings. "Did you ever happen to hear Mrs. Treherne or any one speak of a lady called Mrs. Dee?" she asked.

"Yes, often," said Grace, smiling a little.

"What did she say?"

"She said Mrs. Dee should never set foot in her house again," replied Grace; "but perhaps I ought not to have told. Mrs. Treherne sometimes says more than she quite means. And she is not very fond of advice, I think, and she thought Mrs. Dee gave her a great deal of advice, and had no right."

"Then there were two Miss Lovels?"

Grace was silent.

"They did not like being visited?"

"Miss Lavinia thought it was kindly meant," said Grace, "but Miss Betsy said an impertinent person had called one day without an introduction or anything to say."

"Mrs. Dee spoke also of a Mrs. Anderson, a Scotchwoman, I think, who had lost two children."

Grace colored a little.

"I am sure Mrs. Dee could not have meant it, but something she said once pained Mrs. Anderson. I went into her little parlor one afternoon and found her crying bitterly. She very seldom shows what she feels. But she was quite sobbing then, and she said, 'O Miss Grace, the lady said, the house ought to be a model of neatness, with no children to put things out of order!—no children! —no bairns!—none indeed in the house to make stir or life in it now! No Alick or Maggie now!' And Mrs. Anderson could not say any more, her voice was so choked because of her little son and daughter who died. And I could not think what to say to comfort her; sometimes things you mean to comfort seem only to make the pain worse, when it is very bitter. So I could do nothing but sit down and cry too. And then after a few minutes Mrs. Anderson became quiet, and the sobs stopped, and she looked up and said, 'I gave them up to the Lord years ago, Miss Grace. And I give them up now. The Lord knows that tears are not murmurs, and pain is not sin. *He knows.*' And before I went away she told me not to think harshly of Mrs. Dee, for she was a benevolent lady and meant well, and if there were some wounds that would burst out with the old anguish whenever they're touched, it was not to be expected a stranger would know that."

"Mrs. Anderson was not angry then with Mrs. Dee?"

"Not at all," said Grace. "She said she was no more to be blamed than a person in the street who seized you by a broken arm, to push you out of the

way of something he thought might hurt you. How could he know it would pain you?"

"The best way is never to seize people roughly, I think," said Mrs. O'Brien. "But when one thinks what storms every one may have had, it does seem a great risk to plunge in on them in that indiscriminate kind of way. I am afraid Mrs. Dee must have left a great many people rather out of temper."

"I do not know," said Grace. "Mrs. Anderson told me afterwards of some very kind things she did. There were two or three men whom she took great trouble to get into work, and succeeded. And there was one family of orphans whom she provided for in various asylums. And several people she stirred up to sending their children to school, paying for some of the poorest. And others she got to understand the good of fresh air and cleanliness, and made their homes quite a different thing. Mrs. Anderson thought she did many good things for the people. She said she thinks God never lets any one try to help others without doing some good."

"Then some of the people were grateful to Mrs. Dee?"

"I am not quite sure of that," said Grace, coloring. "Perhaps they ought. But I heard father and Mr. Treherne once talking about it. Father said that Mrs. Dee was an excellent woman, and people ought to be grateful to ladies coming down out of their way from their comfortable homes to lift poor fallen people out of misery. But Mr. Treherne said the poor law was an excellent institution,

and a steam crane was an excellent thing to lift things out of a ship, but no one ever thought of being grateful to the poor law or to a steam crane; and he thought it was not so much the things done for people, as the heart it was done with that made people grateful."

"Mr. Treherne must be a remarkably sensible man for a greengrocer," said Mrs. O'Brien.

Grace was perplexed. It had never occurred to her that intellect was to be classified according to trade, and she did not know what to say.

"I understand," said Mrs. O'Brien, "they feel people like Mrs. Dee like a kind of embodied society; a sort of charity-machine. They are helped, but the heart is not cheered and comforted. But how is that to be done? You seem to know a great deal of the poor. I wish you would tell me what you do when you visit the poor. Mrs. Dee asked me to take her district, but I do not know how."

Grace looked up in wonder.

"I am sure I cannot tell you anything, Mrs. O'Brien," she said. "I do know a good many people who are poor, but I never thought of them so much as 'the poor,' as of people that had been given me to know and love, and who happen to be poor and in trouble, which, of course, makes one love them all the more. They are the parents of my school-children, and blind Jenny, and a few besides. I go to see them just as I do the Miss Lovels, to read to them, or talk to them, or to listen, or to do anything they seem to want. They are my friends, you know, Mrs. O'Brien, so it is quite easy. I do

not see how I ever could help and comfort any unless they were my friends, unless I cared about them, and they cared about me. I am afraid I do not know anything about visiting the poor. But I am only a child," concluded Grace apologetically.

"But how am I to make friends among the poor, my child?" said Mrs. O'Brien. "Tell me your secret."

"I am sure I cannot tell," said Grace; and then she added musingly, "I think friends come one by one, Mrs. O'Brien, not in a district, all at once, do they? If you could begin with one, you might go on, mightn't you?" "And," she added, smiling suddenly, as if a bright thought had struck her, "you have one friend in Mrs. Dee's own district. There is little Fan who has come to be Mrs. Treherne's little maid. She says you are the kindest and sweetest spoken lady she ever saw, and were so kind to her and Dan. She and Dan think there's no one in the world so good as you and Miss Winifred and Mr. Bertram. She says you not only gave them all they wanted, but you took Dan's hand as he lay in the bed at the hospital and stroked it like their mother used, and smoothed his pillow. And she says she saw great tears in your eyes the first time you saw him. She knows you feel in your heart for Dan, little Fan says. O Mrs. O'Brien," concluded Grace, "you have one friend to begin with. You have won little Fan's heart. Oh, do take Mrs. Dee's district."

Great tears started to Mrs. O'Brien's eyes then, and she said little more. She only took Grace's two hands in hers and murmured:

"Perhaps it is not too late to begin, even for me, Grace. I began to be afraid it was."

Lady Katharine's tête-à-tête with Grace was briefer. Little Grace was standing in the Rock Garden watching the fountain with the water-lilies, in a perfect trance of pleasure.

"You seem to admire this place very much, my child," she said. "What were you thinking of?"

"I was thinking of Paradise Lost," said Grace, coloring a little, for she felt a little instinctive sense that Lady Katharine would not quite understand, yet she was too honest not to give a direct answer—"and the garden there."

"That shows how much Milton was right in saying 'the mind is its own place,' Grace," replied Lady Katharine. "Now while you were having such beautiful thoughts, I was thinking that I felt like a Newfoundland dog in a greenhouse. Everything is so small, and neat, and perfect in these suburban gardens, I feel as if I were in a china shop, I am always afraid of breaking or disarranging something. I must persuade you and Mr. Leigh to come to Combe. We have real wild tangled woods there, and a real wild river, with such lovely wild flowers, and great, wet, green ferns about it, and a little way off the sea, a real, noisy, blustering, hearty sea. Would you like to come?"

Grace's eyes shone.

"If father could have a holiday," she said.

"Very well. I have your promise. We will try and arrange the rest, and you are to bring your

colors, and you may paint from morning to night."

"I think I should be too happy to paint," said Grace. "I should be always wanting to look and listen."

"Well then, you shall do nothing from morning till night, if you like that better. All my guests are free as air."

"But please, Lady Katharine," said Grace, "I should not like that at all. But looking and listening are not always doing nothing, are they?"

"I will debate that point when you are at Combe," said Lady Katharine, "however, I am quite sure doing nothing sometimes does wonders. And I hope you will see that with your father. We will not let him, at all events, do a thing from morning till night, and you yourself shall draw, and Mr. Leigh will grow quite young and strong, with a voice like a lion, and a step like a deer."

"It would be nice to hear father's voice quite strong again," said Grace, calling largely on her recollection of the Zoological Gardens to realize Lady Katharine's similes. "He was quite strong once, and used to take such long walks when he was at Cambridge."

"We will make him quite strong again," said Lady Katharine decisively.

And Grace, looking up into her kind, clear, powerful eyes, felt as if Lady Katharine really could do whatever she would.

Winifred was quite satisfied with the impression produced by her friend.

"That child is a gentlewoman through and through," pronounced Lady Katharine; "she would be as much at home at court as in a cottage, and as sweet and humble with a beggar as with the queen. But that is only natural. Her father is a true gentleman of the old school. Her mother must have been a thoroughly well-bred person. That kind of thing only comes by race—that tact and delicate instinct what to do and say. Every look of her sweet, calm, motherly-like face, every movement of her pretty, small, white hands, has a charm in it. And her voice is, as sentimental people would say, like a summer wind, not ringing like a fairy bell, like our Winnie's, and sometimes like a very pertinacious little bell, but like a thought unconsciously taking sound. She ought to sing; she must have lessons."

"She does sing, Aunt Katharine, little Fan told me so. She sang once by Dan's bedside."

"Ah," said Lady Katharine meditatively, "then perhaps she had better not have lessons. They might spoil her. I know how she would sing—warbling like a bird, no great compass, but rich, and tremulous, and full. Those voices are spoiled by forcing them into heights and depths, or fettering them with rules. No, she must not have lessons."

Rosalie also had her commendations of Mademoiselle. Of Grace's French, she had expressed (privately to Winnie) an opinion, I am sorry to say, confirmatory of Grace's own worst suspicions. But of Grace herself there could be but one opinion.

"The dress of your compatriots usually," she said, "has the look of being built upon them. First, no doubt, as a foundation there is a human figure. On this is constructed an erection of clothes, manufactured by the thousand, like regimental uniforms, without reference to individualities. Colors, shades, materials are distributed as in a lottery. But with Mademoiselle Grace, as with a Parisian, her toilette is her own, from the small, high-instepped, firmly planted feet, to the small round throat which the simple dress clasps so well. There is a character in everything, from her chaussure to her glossy brown hair. I do not say some of your countrywomen cannot make grand toilettes. My lady Katharine sweeps her black moirée and her lace shawl around her in grand simple folds, like a queen's robes. But Mademoiselle Grace's dress enfolds her as the green leaves enfold a lily bud. And in her manners such a repose. She understood also, when I was dressing your hair, Mademoiselle Winnie, that the toilette is a work of art, a sculpture, a painting, only with living subjects; not to be hurried over like a mere mechanical operation. Mademoiselle Grace has appreciation. With six months' education she might mingle in the first salons of Paris and not be distinguished from a young lady of the old noblesse. She might walk through Paris, and no one say, That is not a Parisian."

And beyond that Winnie knew commendation from Rosalie would not soar.

Mrs. O'Brien said little. Her heart was drawn to the gentle, humble, loving child, she felt afraid to say how much.

A new meaning seemed to shine for her that night in the words, "Except ye enter the kingdom of heaven as a little child, ye shall in no wise enter therein."

And as Winnie looked at her illuminated text in the evening, the divine voice seemed all the deeper and sweeter from the human tones which echoed it. "We love Him because he first loved us."

"How much more must Grace love God," she thought, "than I do, to be so much more like him. But yet it is, 'He loved *us*'—*me* as well as Grace, and Dan, and Maurice, and the people who are so much better than I am. How good it is of God to make those who are so really good, love me who am not. And yet, I suppose," she concluded, "it is because they are so really good, that they do love people who are not, but are meant to be. Because that is just what God does. The people who are best must love most, always, I suppose, and love first. Only God begins before any one else. He must begin to love us before we even want to be good. But that is, of course, because he is best of all. And how happy it is to think of that."

So happy, that in a few minutes the happy child fell asleep with a warm, safe feeling at her heart, as if she had been lulled to sleep by her mother's voice singing hymns softly by her bedside.

Mr. Leigh and Grace were driven home in Mr. O'Brien's carriage, a proceeding which highly im-

pressed Mrs. Treherne, although it was not an economical mode of conveyance to Mr. Leigh, who thought it his duty to give the coachman a larger fee than his and Grace's omnibus fare.

But he returned really refreshed. "I declare, it has made me feel quite young, and they were very kind, Gracie," he said; "I am sure I cannot tell why, but they really did seem to enjoy it almost as much as we did."

Lady Katharine carried her point. A clergyman was found, by her exertions, to take Mr. Leigh's duty for six weeks, at St. Cuthbert's, and at the Workhouse. Mr. Leigh's many scruples were overcome, not so much by force of argument, as by force of will, and the day of departure was fixed.

All Grace's little world was set in commotion on the morning of that memorable day. Mrs. Treherne considered the whole expedition a great risk, living, as she did, in the conviction that it was nothing but her skillful counteracting of the various snares, which in this world of mutual preying on each other, continually endanger helpless and unsuspicious creatures like Mr. Leigh and Grace, that preserved them from unknown disasters from day to day. She had, however, an aunt, a small farmer's wife, living some few miles from Combe Monachorum, to whom she gave Mr. Leigh a parcel to be delivered at his convenience, partly from a wish to communicate with her aunt, but chiefly because, as she said, "Mr. Leigh, poor dear good gentleman, knew no more of the world than an infant, and if

anything should go wrong, her aunt was a comfortable woman, that had her eyes in her head, and had brought up her children; and she could look after him."

Mrs. Anderson was under no apprehension of the kind. She believed Miss Grace was going among those who were naturally fit to be her companions, and she rejoiced in it.

Miss Betsy Lovel gave Grace the benefit of all her little store of old-fashioned rules of etiquette, how to address people of title, etc., which might have tended to perplex the child, if Miss Lavinia and Miss Betsy had been able quite to agree on the subject. But as they could not, she wisely resolved not to burden herself with any of them.

"You will come back quite a grand lady, Gracie," said Miss Lavinia, from her resting-place on the sofa, "and not care to have anything to say to your poor old friends."

But her trustful look and her loving fondling of Grace's bright hair, as she knelt beside her, quite belied her doubting words, and Grace vouchsafed no answer, but kisses on the thin, long fingers.

"What ideas to put into the dear child's head, sister," said Miss Betsy, bridling a little. "Grace is not the first person of our acquaintance, I am sure, who has been invited to stay with an earl's daughter. In my grandfather's regiment, I have heard my mother say, they thought very little of 'honorables.' Not that I should disparage the aristocracy," continued Miss Lovel, in a patronizing way, "It is not for us to undervalue the ancient institu-

tions of the country. My mother, when she was a little girl, was in the habit of playing every day with the granddaughters of an Irish viscount. To say nothing of our own connections, which might look like boasting. I am sure, my dear Gracie," she concluded, "you will not understand my sister's humility. She would be the last to wish to put foolish worldly ideas in your head. Rank is nothing, Gracie, my dear; and wealth is vanity. The one thing, as you say in your catechism, is to do your duty in the state of life to which it pleases God to call us. But there are few families in the kingdom before whom the Lovels would be ashamed to hold up their heads. All my sister, Miss Lavinia, meant, my dear, was to warn you against worldly ideas, now that you are going out into the world for the first time."

But Grace and Miss Lavinia had not in the least misunderstood each other. Grace was a little bewildered with Miss Betsy's explanations and exhortations, but she only said:

"Please, I do not think I am going out into the world, Miss Lovel, at all. We are only going into the country."

Little Fan and Grace understood each other better on the subject.

"I am going into the country, Fan," said Grace, "the real country where God made everything with his own hands."

"Please, Miss Grace," said Fan, "you will tell me all about it when you come back. Dan says when you wake up in the morning in the country,

the first thing you hear is the birds singing; and the corn grows so tall, I could hardly see over it, Dan says; and the flowers grow so beautiful, and belong to nobody, and there is nobody to look after them, and there are creatures that build houses and roof them, and creatures that crack nuts and sit on the trees eating them. Dan reads such lots of things in his books. But the other boy at the shop says some of them books are all made up like, and are nothing but lies. And Dan wants to know."

So anxious was little Fan to deliver Dan from the sceptical doubts of bakers' boys—and such a paradise did "the country" seem to both the children.

They started early on the morning of their departure, to be in time for a parliamentary train. Harry on the outside of the cab, fraternizing in a manly way with the cabman, and ostentatiously protecting everybody and everything; Grace inside silently caring for her father, Harry, and every article of luggage, her traveling bag full of provisions of her own, increased by sundry gifts from her friends; and Mr. Leigh beside her, persuaded they should be too late for the train, and inwardly debating in his own mind whether, in that case, he might not regard it as a providential intimation that he had better return to his work and his corner by the fire-place, his apprehensions having been in no degree relieved by Mrs. Treherne's farewell, as with tears on her cheeks, she said, "Well, we can only hope all 'll be for the best, Mr.

Leigh, and you'll all come back safe. But it's a wicked world, and full of dangers, and them railways is no better than so many man-slaughterers. However, the Almighty can do all things, and some folks do come back alive, there's no denying."

Once embarked in the train, however, beyond the power of altering his decision, Mr. Leigh's spirits began to revive. He was a little anxious at first as to whether he was performing his duties to various fellow-passengers, encumbered with babies and with burdens of various kinds; but rather a vague offer of assistance, which he made to an earnest-minded person with two huge bundles, a large boy and a basket, who stumbled into the carriage rather hot from an encounter with a porter, having been apparently misunderstood and resented, Mr. Leigh felt himself justified in retiring into private life. The earnest-minded person remarked that "every one thought they could impose on a poor lone woman, with a poor helpless infant; but that if the railway thought she was going to trust her little property to be kicked or tossed about by porters, the railway was mistaken; and if other people thought she took more room than she had a title to, they had better complain to the railway and not to her. She had not had the making of the carriages." On which, Mr. Leigh feeling himself inextricably involved with personified railway companies and impertinent porters in a catalogue of the enemies of lone women, attempted no defence, but confined himself thenceforth to his duties to Grace and

Harry, and to as small a space of the carriage as was compatible with retaining any of the properties of matter. Harry, meantime, on his part, carried on a silent war of defiant glances with his father's foe, and Grace gave herself up undisturbed to the unutterable delight of whirling through countless miles of cool delicious green, and looking up into boundless depths of pure sunny blue.

The historical stateliness of the gray old Abbey, and the lofty avenues of Combe Monachorum had not at all the depressing effect on Mr. Leigh produced by his cousin Felix Hunter's great house in Bedford Square. Partly because they lifted him by the force of association from the petty thoughts of to-day into the calm of history. And partly, no doubt, because he felt that whatever might have been his sins of omission in not acquiring a home in Bedford Square, even Mr. Hunter, judging by his highest standard of duty, could not have reasonably expected him to provide his family with an estate like Combe Monachorum and an ancestry reaching back to the days of Alfred the Great. He was therefore delivered from any sense of responsibility and failure in the matter, and felt at liberty to enjoy the woods and meadows of the Abbey with as complete an absence of self-reproach as if he had been called to be a guest at the British Museum, or the Zoological Gardens, or any other neutral territory which no one could have expected him to possess. Moreover, there was none of that solemn sense of success and impeccability at Combe Monachorum which upheld every one in the house

in Bedford Square, and made it quite an effort of self-restraint to Mr. Leigh not to apologize to the very superior footman who helped him to take off his great-coat, for its being a little shabby and rubbed about the collar.

The old butler at the Abbey evidently took a paternal interest in Mr. Leigh from the first, regarding him as a London gentleman, of rather an absent mind, not much acquainted with the country, and requiring to be watched in a delicate manner and kept out of danger. He accordingly warned Mr. Leigh repeatedly concerning any of the dogs who were apt to be uncivil to strangers, and any field in which there were cattle given to run at intruders, and any steep places on the cliffs at the entrance of the Combe over which unwary people had at any time stumbled; warnings which, if they tended a little to increase Mr. Leigh's natural nervousness, and to keep him in a state of apprehension out of doors, yet served to convince him effectually of the friendly intentions of the butler.

The housekeeper, also a Wesleyan, took him under her especial protection, confided to him her family joys and sorrows, declared his discourse did her as much good as any sermon she ever heard at the meeting, and repaid his sympathy by a mild tyranny in the form of hot possets at night for the good of his throat, and cold bitters in the morning for the good of his chest. Indeed the servants in general declared that since master died, they had not seen such a gentleman as Mr. Leigh. He made

no more mark on the floors with his shoes than a ghost. He was so anxious to give no trouble, it was quite a trouble to find out what he wanted; and he was as thankful for any one answering the bell as if it had been quite an unexpected favor. Then for all he seemed so in the clouds, he saw in a moment if any one was in want of a kind word. Sarah, the under-housemaid, had lost her brother, and she had been crying one morning as she was washing the door-steps, when Mr. Leigh was going out for his early walk; and he saw it, and spoke so feelingly to her, and when he found what was the matter, he crept away that very morning to see Sarah's mother who was a widow, and gave her such a discourse and such a prayer, Sarah said, that her mother was quite lifted up like, and said she should never forget it.

So that Mr. Leigh naturally felt more at home at Combe than Bedford Square. The Combe Monachorum household was not like Mr. Hunter's—a museum of models, all of them representative men and women—but a collection of peccable and fallible human beings like Mr. Leigh himself; and association of human beings of that ordinary kind, if less elevating and improving, is also less overpowering. The mutual links between the representative units themselves may be of a very elevated and representative character; but the links of those units with inferior orders of humanity being rather quantitative, or arithmetical, than personal, are apt to be similar to the relations between a unit and its fractions, and, therefore, oppressive to

the fractions. Especially if the fraction is burdened, like Mr. Leigh, with the sense that it ought to have been a unit, and is deeply responsible for being a fraction at all. For what, as Cousin Felix or Mrs. Dee, or any representative unit knows, is a fraction but a fragment, broken, and chipped, and squeezed, and jostled by its own inherent brittleness and compressibility, encountering an energetic and advancing age, out of the upper line altogether till it had sunk below the surface of society into the line of minuses, and ceased to have any real value or standing at all in the universe.

At Combe Monachorum, as in his own little circle in the east of London, the arithmetical or quantitative relations gave way to the human. And Mr. Leigh was not without gleams of hope that this might also be the case in another Home where certain two mites, and even a cup of cold water, which would not have cost one mite, are said to be invested with a value plainly not dependent on any known laws of number or magnitude.

Grace meanwhile, having never been distressed with any social responsibilities of the kind, feeling her father's lot as the curate, and her own as the curate's daughter, to be as divinely ordered as the Archbishop of Canterbury's or Lady Katharine's, and being, moreover, relieved of her own peculiar responsibilities with regard to her father and Harry, by seeing her father quite at home, and enjoying his long solitary rambles, and Harry safe and proud under the gamekeeper, and in charge of a pony for his own use, was for the first time in her life since

her mother's death once more a free and joyous child, without any one in particular to take care of, having only to exercise that mild protectorate of her fellow-creatures in general, which was her natural prerogative.

Lady Katharine provided Grace and Harry with two occupations which were the source to them of endless adventures and delights. One was to stock an aquarium with sea-creatures from the rocky pools and the sands on the sea-shore, which was not a mile distant. The other was to supply a wild-garden she was forming with wild flowers and ferns. As early as possible after breakfast, the two children started, Harry accoutred with a manly knapsack containing sundry satisfactory West-country pasties; and armed (according to their various destinations) with a spade, trowel, and basket, or with a large-mouthed glass bottle, and a small net on a hoop.

To Harry these excursions had all the excitement of hunting or deerstalking. Steeple chases, indeed, he made of them, marching Grace with a lofty scorn of obstacles over hedges, and up and down cliffs, whilst she never thought of questioning that this was the ordinary mode of progress in "the country," being imposed on by Harry's narrations of his Hampstead experiences. His delight was in the pursuit and the capture, in the scrambles by the way, and in baffling the attempts of the various creatures to escape. They were to him in starting like going off to the wars; and in returning, like the march of a conqueror. He shouldered

his spade like a rifle, and handled his trowel like a carbine, and dug out tiny sea anemones, or seized recalcitrant crabs with as much triumph as if they had been foxes or cannibals, especially if the achievement could be accomplished, as it frequently was, at some risk to his neck.

Grace's delight, on the other hand, was in penetrating into all kinds of hidden nooks and corners of the beautiful world, in tracing the streams, the flowers and the shells to their cradles and homes.

"It will always sound like a bit of poetry, you know, Harry," she said, "after this, to hear them crying periwinkles in the streets. It will take us back to the rock-pools, and the sands, and the shining sea with all its sounds. It will be almost as good as a bit of Homer."

"Quite, I think," said Harry, whose associations with periwinkles had not previously been of a painful kind, and whose recollections of Homer were not of unmixed delight.

To Grace these expeditions were voyages of discovery. No voyager on unexplored seas ever delighted more in the sight of new shores than Grace whenever she lighted on a new world of wonders in some still rock-pool, where tiny silvery fish flashed in and out among sea-weeds and crimson corallines, or in some woodland nook where ferns and wild flowers nestled around the cradles of the brooks. Many a time she thanked God silently in her heart for opening, one by one, the doors of these treasure-chambers of his beautiful world to her. All day long she often felt as if she were

being led by the hand into room after room of God's palaces.

"Oh, Harry," she said, as they were sitting on rocks one day at their luncheon, when, as usual, she had clasped her hands, and said her grace, "Harry, it seems as if one must be saying grace all day long. It seems like eating and drinking delight into one's very heart all day long, to wander about like this."

Chapter VIII.

THE arrival of Mrs. O'Brien and Winnie, and Winnie's accession to the children's exploring parties certainly did not decrease their perils. To Winnie, as to Harry, more than half the pleasure was in the climbing and the daring. While Grace looked on these perils as necessary ingredients in the pleasures, and, therefore, never thought of evading them more than she would any other risk in her path, Winnie delighted in the daring for its own sake, and she and Harry excited each other to more and more adventurous feats, until one day these expeditions had very nearly been brought to an abrupt conclusion.

"Madame," exclaimed Rosalie, rushing one afternoon into the drawing-room, where Lady Katharine and Mrs. O'Brien were sitting, "lose not a moment, I implore. I come from watching Mademoiselle Winnie descend a precipice where none but a chamois, or a creature with wings, could tread with safety. I stand on the summit, I wring my hands,

I cry to her, I implore her with every gesture of passion to return. But the sea drowns my voice, and mademoiselle, with the recklessness of childhood, only waves her hand and laughs. At length I see her reach the sands below. I clasp my hands, and thank a merciful Heaven for this miracle. Then I rush home to tell you and my lady, that you may be there to prevent these young creatures from rushing on self-destruction."

Mrs. O'Brien threw on a shawl and prepared to follow Rosalie in a tremor of alarm. Lady Katharine said quietly:

"Don't be too uneasy, Cecil. Rosalie does not know what a nation of cats we are. It is as natural to an English boy to scramble to a mast-head as to a French boy to dance. But we will certainly go and see. From Rosalie's description I think they must be below the cliffs just on the other side of the hill."

Climbing through the wood behind the abbey, by a short cut, they soon reached the open down at the top. But before they had crossed it to the edge of the cliffs which bordered it, one after another the figures of two of the three culprits appeared, Harry helping Winnie.

Lady Katharine, having firm nerves, went to the edge, and there saw little Grace struggling up an almost perpendicular slide of slaty rock, with a load of sea-weed. Harry wanted to go down and help her; but she refused his help, and in time she was high enough to accept Lady Katharine's hand, and sprang to the top.

Lady Katharine was not at all excitable; but she did breathe an involuntary sigh of relief as she drew Grace away from the edge.

"Grace," she said, "I thought you were a very wise and sober-minded little woman. I find you are first cousin to an Alpine chamois. What ever tempted you to attempt such a precipice? Have you no fear?"

"A little," said Grace quietly, "I did not like it at all at first; but Harry said people had always to go by paths of that kind on the sea-shore, so I thought it was of no use to be afraid, and I came."

Lady Katharine gave a quiet pleased-like little laugh.

"But, as to you," she resumed, turning to Winnie and Harry, whose hair was streaming in the wind, "you little Berserkers, what have you to say for yourselves?"

"It was such a delightfully difficult place, please, Aunt Katharine," pleaded Winnie. "Harry had always been wishing to try it; and to-day the tide is coming in so fast that we persuaded Grace."

Harry had nothing to plead in extenuation. His courage was not so much moral as physical, and as the conscious ringleader, he felt, moreover, the additional burden of guilt.

"Grace," said Lady Katharine, with a forced gravity, "I am very much amazed at you. I thought you were as good as a little mother to these wild young people. How can I ever trust you together again?"

Grace looked up, and, meeting the smile in

Lady Katharine's eyes, was not at all alarmed, but only said:

"Please, Lady Katharine, I am really rather glad we must not go up quite such dangerous places any more."

But Harry, not having courage to meet Lady Katharine's eyes, yet not hesitating an instant to rush to his sister's defence, said, with a very crimson face:

"It was not Grace's fault at all, Lady Katharine. She is as good as a mother to me always; or she would be, but I would not let her. It is all my fault. Please, you must not be angry with Grace."

"Very pretty dictation from a prisoner at the bar to the judge," said Lady Katharine; "and now, culprits, hear your sentences: Harry and Winnie are sentenced not to break their necks more than once a day; and Grace is sentenced not to let them. Now you are free."

Pondering which oracular judgment, the three children went home to dinner. And Lady Katharine, following slowly, said to Mrs. O'Brien:

"Those children will do, Cecil. The boy has a true man's courage. He is not afraid of danger, but he is afraid of disgrace; yet he will encounter disgrace rather than let another bear an unjust burden. And Grace has a true woman's courage. She will shrink from nothing that is to be encountered in the path she is once persuaded she ought to take. True woman and true man—that is, gentlewoman and gentleman. Yes, our Winnie may be content with her friends."

The next day Maurice arrived, a great festival to the children, and above all to Winnie. He looked white, Lady Katharine said, and worn, and altogether in want of wind and sunshine. He was also a little more silent than usual with the grown-up portion of the circle, although with Winnie, Grace, and Harry, as merry in his quiet way as ever, and ready to initiate Harry into all kinds of games and feats.

A few days afterwards it chanced that a pony carriage drove to the door, containing a lady and a little girl, and in a minute Miss Minna Denison was ushered into the library, where they were all sitting. She came with an invitation to Lady Katharine from her sister, with whom she was staying.

She was looking brilliant with her rapid drive through the fresh morning air, and was especially gracious, charming Mr. Leigh by her pretty naive questions about the natives of the east of London, and drawing him into descriptions which appeared to surprise and interest her intensely.

Between Lady Katharine and Miss Denison there seemed to be an ancient and instinctive antagonism. Lady Katharine had often seen Minna at intervals from her childhood, and believed her to have precisely that unreality and ineffectiveness of character to which she was disposed to be unmerciful. Her quick eyes, moreover, had caught a change in Maurice's face at the announcement of Minna's name which did not at all decrease this distaste; and the more rapturous was Miss Denison's delight in the brilliancy of the garden, the grandeur of the cedars,

and the historical associations, the more brief and dry were Lady Katharine's remarks. It provoked her, especially to see Mr. Leigh's simplicity, as she considered, imposed upon. And when Mr. Leigh began to regret he had no reports of his ragged schools to give Miss Denison, Lady Katharine's impatience overflowed all bounds, and she said:

"Do not trouble yourself, Mr. Leigh, I have some sketches by a cousin of mine in the Fiji Islands, which will interest Miss Denison quite as much, perhaps for the time. You can send the reports, you know, to me," she added, apologizing to Mr. Leigh's rather perplexed look. "I will forward them to Miss Denison."

Nevertheless, Lady Katharine's hospitality got the better of her "anti-pathetic" feelings to the extent of asking Minna to have the horses put up, and to share an expedition they had planned to the sea-shore, an invitation which Minna, seeing, she said, how her little niece was enchanted with her playfellows, had not the heart to disappoint her by refusing—Minna Denison having a habit of persuading herself whenever she did anything she liked, that it was because she wished to gratify some one else.

And thus it happened that while Mr. Leigh drove Lady Katharine and Mrs. O'Brien round to the point to be reached, in a basket-carriage, and Winnie and Harry made straight for it by all kinds of marvelous and perilous short cuts across the cliffs, Minna was not able to get through the various difficulties of the way without Maurice Bertram's as-

sistance, so that the care of little Clare entirely devolved on Grace, who took the child carefully round by the easiest paths she could find, lifting her over the stiles. Once, indeed, Maurice looked back, rather hesitating whom he ought to help, and at once Minna proposed to wait. But when they arrived she said, in her gracious little way, to Grace:

"Any one can see how fond you are of children, Miss Leigh. Little Clare felt it the first moment she saw you. Do you like to be with Miss Leigh, Clare, or will you come to auntie?" she said.

The child clung to Grace's protecting hand, and looked up in her face.

"There, Clare, your choice is plain enough. What a blessing for you that auntie is not given to jealousy! But don't let Clare be a trouble," she added to Grace; "and don't be willful and troublesome, Clare, to Miss Leigh."

"Miss Leigh says I am no trouble," said Clare. "You like having me, don't you, Miss Leigh?"

"Yes, I do, indeed," said Grace.

So, in a sense, she did, although it was not without some little wish to participate that she saw Winnie and Harry eagerly hunting among the pools on the rocks below, or listened to such fragments as she caught of Mr. Bertram's and Miss Denison's conversation about books and art, and schools, and various things that especially interested her. And moreover, Clare, being a spoilt only child, was occasionally very willful and exacting, and required all Grace's skill to keep her out of mischief.

Meantime Maurice Bertram's manner was greatly

perplexing Minna Denison. It was so completely the manner of a mere acquaintance. He failed so entirely to follow up any allusion to their former pursuits together at Beechlands, that Minna began to wonder whether he had ever really cared for her at all, or whether he had transferred his allegiance to some one else. And this very doubt just piqued and interested her sufficiently to lead her not to be easy until she had solved it. She was not accustomed to see her captives so easily glide out of the ranks of her triumphal procession. And the true solution never occurred to her. She never conjectured that Maurice had so sincere a faith in her truth and goodness that he felt sure she never would have given him the answer she had in the easy and unpained way she had, if there had been ever the slightest real interest in him in her heart.

If at moments he in his heart felt a little perplexity that after what had passed she should wish for any conversation with him at all, he set it down to the entire indifference to him, which made her unable to conceive his feelings, combined with that general graciousness of hers, which made it impossible for her not to try to make things pleasant to every one.

So they walked on separately, Grace coaxing Clare into ways as little perilous as possible, until they reached the sands, not far from the place of rendezvous, and with some relief Grace resigned her dangerous charge into the hands of Aunt Minna.

Minna was alone, Maurice having gone forward to ask the meaning of a sign from the pony-carriage,

which was halting in the distance, and she drew Grace into a conversation about her father and her home-life, which absorbed Grace entirely until they were both roused by a sharp childish shriek at some little distance above them, and looking around they saw little Clare a long way above, on the side of the cliff, rolling down a slide of loose slate until she reached a projecting piece of rock, to which she clung, shrieking violently.

Minna clapsed her hands. "What shall we do?" she exclaimed; "it is exactly the kind of place I never could climb over."

Grace was on her way up the cliff without another word.

"Oh, don't! don't!" exclaimed Minna, and she ran in the other direction crying for help.

In a minute or two Maurice was by her side.

"Look!" she said, pointing to where Grace was climbing, and then turning away her head, she hid her face, "What are we to do? If I look again I shall faint!"

Maurice surveyed the ground for an instant before he decided what to do. He saw that Grace, in her haste, had taken the wrong path, and that between her and little Clare jutted up a sharp point of rock which it seemed impossible for her to cross. But in another instant Grace was creeping ronnd it on her knees, and catching hold of little Clare's dress, reassured her, and held her tight until Maurice climbed up by another way, steeper, but practicable, by means of narrow ledges in the rock, and rescued them both.

"How can I ever thank you enough?" said Minna, when they returned.

"It is more Miss Leigh you have to thank than me," he said. "One would think you had been trained as chamois-hunter," he added, with a smile, to Grace; "people do not grow into heroines in a moment."

"I have had some practice lately," said Grace, blushing partly at his praise, and partly at the recollection of Lady Katharine's exhortations.

"It is a great gift not to be too sensitive," said Minna. "If I had looked at you all another instant I should have fainted. I was absolutely obliged to cover my eyes."

He glanced for an instant from her mobile brilliant face, as she sat on a rock, caressing the sobbing child, to Grace, who stood pale and quiet near, while

> "On her eyelids many graces sat,
> Under the shadow of her even brows,"

as if a contrast were flashed suddenly on him. If so, his thoughts were arrested by an exclamation from Minna, who, covering her eyes in earnest, said:

"O Clare! what have you done to yourself? Look at her arm, Miss Leigh; what can we do? I never could bear to see anything like that!"

And looking at Clare's arm, Grace perceived a deep cut, which in her terror the child had scarcely noticed, but which was now beginning to bleed.

"I can bear it, Miss Denison," said Grace, quietly;

"I had to get used to it when Harry had his head cut at cricket. I think I know what to do, if you will let me try."

And she began gently to wash the wound from the sand, which was likely to irritate it, with water from her painting-tin.

But Clare struggled and shrieked, and Minna petted and pitied her, and declared she couldn't bear to see the child hurt. So that it was not until Maurice took the child on his knee, and with a few firm, gentle words, encouraged her to brave and bear the pain, that Grace succeeded in binding up the cut, while Minna moved away, only returning when all was accomplished, to lavish the tenderest caresses on Clare, and the tenderest pity on herself.

"I know you all think me very sensitive and ridiculous," she said, as they walked over the sands to rejoin the rest of the party.

But except Minna Denison herself, none of them were at that moment thinking of Minna Denison at all. Grace was thinking how to comfort little Clare, who was thinking to some profit between her sobs that it would have been better if she had done what she was told. And Maurice was not exactly thinking at all, but was feeling that there were things more feminine, as well as more heroic, to do on such occasions than to faint, and that it was possible for people to be so sensitive about their own sensations as to be rather insensible to the wants of others; a feeling which was deepened as he observed how Minna's sensitiveness did not at all affect her enjoyment of the rest of the entertainment, and heard

her giving a narrative of the whole proceedings, in which the chief contrasts lay between her own tender and too-feeling heart and Grace's marvelously strong nerves.

Grace, meanwhile, after persuading every one but Lady Katharine that she was not in the least agitated, finally belied herself by only escaping an actual fainting fit, through Lady Katharine's authoitative administration of a glass of wine at the moment when the delicate color usual to her was fading into a deadly paleness.

Minna Denison's review of the proceedings of that day, when she sat alone in the evening to contemplate herself before her material and spiritual looking-glasses, was not altogether satisfactory.

The vision of that sweet pale face of little Grace rose before her as at all events more fit for transference to a sacred picture than the soft brilliant color and eyes before her. And at the same time also rose before her the vision of a self-sacrificing love, not leaping into chasms, or sitting transfixed as with arrows, or reclining on an Oriental couch letting an asp poison the fair round arm, or clothed with wings, but embodied the form of a young girl scarcely more than a child, tenderly, with compressed lips, binding up the wound on the arm of another little child.

But Minna Denison did not transfer this meditation to the velvet diary with the golden lock and key, perhaps because it was the first act of worship in a service and at an altar new to her, whose first

devotions are apt to be expressed, not in any poetical or elevated language at all, but in poor blundering, broken, humble words, mixed with sighs and tears, carefully hidden from the eyes of all but one.

Maurice also had his own private and altered reflections that evening as he reviewed the events of the day. And if these might not have been altogether flattering to Minna Denison, they were far more humbling to himself.

Often and often he had said to himself in that recent struggle with disappointment, how far better it was to have a sacred shrine simply closed on him than to have it desecrated. If Minna's rejection had been like the death of half of himself to him, anything which lowered the thought of her in his heart would, he had thought, have been like annihilation. Anything rather than that! It was much to know that that gracious, pure, true womanly presence was shining somewhere in the world, if not for him. Yet, contrary to what he could have believed, as he thought over the events of that day, a new strength came into his heart. He had been deluded. He had deluded himself. He blamed no one but himself. The idol was not only dethroned, it was broken, or rather nothing had really crossed his path but a dream of his own. The Minna he had loved had never really existed.

Many conflicting feelings sprang out of the annihilation of that mistaken love. Humiliation at his want of penetration; had his own character been deeper and truer, he thought, he surely could not

have failed to feel the want of depth and truth in hers. Thankfulness that he had awakened not too late; and then a generous compassion for her who might, as in outward things, so in inward (he could not help thinking), have been so different and so beautiful. And beside the dissolving image of Minna rose the sweet childish form which shone on Minna's own meditations, which, as his thoughts glided into dreams, became mingled with a white sculptured form of Charity, with the children clustering round her, and a figure like that of the child Samuel kneeling and praying in the twilight of the Temple.

Lady Katharine, on her part, concluded the day with an inward storm of indignation, directed firstly at the blunders of men in general, good men in particular, and Maurice in particular of all good men; and secondly, at the detestable selfish sensitiveness and unreality of young ladies in general, and Minna Denison in particular.

While Grace, perhaps, looked deepest into the matter of them all. For on their way home it had chanced that Grace and Minna being on the seat of the pony carriage alone together, Minna had said:

"How do you make children love you and do what you tell them? Clare clung to you after you had hurt her in binding up her wound, more than to me who could not bear to see her hurt."

"I am sure I don't know," said Grace, "I suppose she felt I did really wish to help her, although I did hurt her. I am afraid I was very awkward."

"But how could you do it?" said Minna, with a little shudder.

Grace looked up in wonder.

"It had to be done, you know, Miss Denison," she said, "and there was no one else. And I had tried before for Harry."

"It is a great blessing not to have one's nerves too finely strung," said Minna; "how I should like to be as courageous as you are!"

Yet the two principles of doing things "*really to help others*," and because they "*had to be done*," instead of in order to *make people love us*, and because *we like*, slowly penetrated into Minna's heart, bringing new thoughts of love and duty, strong enough to overturn her whole dream-world if only they were inspired with the life by which principles grow.

And Grace, pondering Minna's questions that night in her heart, prayed that she might know the joy of loving and helping people, as God loves and helps us; because it seemed to her the power to help followed necessarily on the love.

"Difficulty in visiting the poor, Cecil, what do you mean?" said Lady Katharine, as they were returning from a walk round the village, where she had an inquiry, or a suggestion, or a word of sympathy for every one, from the toddling wee thing to the gray-haired grandfather set to take care of it. "Difficulty in visiting the poor! No more than in visiting any one else; less, indeed, for we have not half the ridiculous crusts of con-

ventionalism to break through with them that we have with other people. In going to see the people in our village, I see mothers and children, sick people, suffering old and young. We speak of births and deaths, and household cares, just the things that are really interesting to us. In calling on my neighbors, we speak of the weather, the Queen's speech, what people are talking about in Parliament or convocation, anything in the world that does *not* interest us, does not come close to us. Of course, I am more at home in visiting the poor. The conversation is real, the interests are natural, the links between us are real and natural. What can you mean by finding it difficult?"

"I do not suppose you do find it difficult, Aunt Katharine. I do not think I should in your place. You know every one in the village, and every one knows you. More than that, you know every one's grandmother or grandchildren, and every one knows yours. And you belong to each other. You are related to each other. You are mistress and servant, landlord and tenant, employer and employed, friends of generations. I think visiting the poor, as you do in the country, might not be difficult even to me; but with me, near London, it is quite different. I have no natural links with the poor."

"Indeed," said Lady Katharine, "then I suppose in the neighborhood of London you have no washerwomen and no cooks. You polish your own boots and scrub your own floors, and dig your own potatoes, I suppose, in the neighborhood of London."

"You do not call paying bills a natural link with

anybody, Aunt Katharine, do you? Besides, I never do pay my own bills."

"I suppose somebody does pay the laundress, however."

"Yes, Mrs. Brewer does. She is my cook and housekeeper, a very respectable person."

"And, I presume, the laundress is a human being who has her own bills to pay, or not to pay," continued Lady Katharine; "and sundry small mouths to fill, or not to fill?"

"I don't know much about her, Aunt Katharine; but I should think the laundress was scarcely poor. Her bills are very high, and she keeps a donkey and a spring-cart, and sends a woman, I think, for the money."

"I suppose, then," pursued Lady Katharine, "it would be no insult to the laundress' woman to call her poor?"

"She does look rather wretched," said Mrs. O'Brien, as if a new light were dawning on her. "I never spoke to her, but I have seen her pass. Mrs. Brewer always pays her, and she says those women who wash for the laundresses are a very low, set, and drink terribly."

"Then we have come at last obviously to the stratum of society which may be called poor, in the person of the laundress' woman, Cecil. But you are four links off from her. Let me see. There is first the very respectable Mrs. Brewer, then the laundress herself, who is almost 'genteel,' since she keeps a spring-cart, which every one knows is next door to a gig, and then the laundress' woman. A

long chain, certainly, for animal magnetism to be conducted through. And then, unfortunately, when you have got to the laundress' woman, she is not the 'right kind of poor' to care about, for she drinks. Some of the people in our village also drink, Cecil, but then, as you say, we have natural links with each other, and I talk to them, and tell them I am sorry for it, and encourage them to try and give it up, and now and then one or two of them do. But I suppose laundress' women who drink are stereotyped in their bad habits."

"They get tired with standing, Mrs. Brewer says, and then they take a little to keep them up, and the little becomes much, and more, and so they become hopeless drunkards."

"Then there is a moment," said Lady Katharine, "at which these laundress women only take a *little*, and are *not* hopeless drunkards. I wonder, Cecil, if any one ever happened to catch them just at that moment, if they might be stopped, and persuaded not to become drunkards? But then, perhaps, they would become respectable, and drive spring-carts, and land you on the other horn of your dilemma. It is very hard for you, certainly, that your 'poor' are all either too respectable to be visited, or too 'low' to be helped. Can you find no one half way? I suppose your butler is far too respectable even to have poor relations."

"Mr. Walters, Aunt Katharine? I am sure I have no idea if he has any relations at all. I should think it quite a liberty to ask him. Besides, he is going to leave us. He said he really

could not live any longer with a low fellow like the footman, who had not the manners to open the doors for the ladies' maids when they left the table."

"The gardener is a man without encumbrances?" asked Lady Katharine.

"No, Aunt Katharine, he has a family of exemplary, neat little children. They go to school, and do everything right. And his wife is a hard-working, decent woman. I do know them well."

"And the kitchen-maid, and under housemaid?" said Lady Katharine, "I suppose they have no relations either? Probably they 'grow'd,' like Topsy."

"I really am afraid I have not done my duty to them, Aunt Katharine; but how is one to know under-servants? Mrs. Brewer thinks it an intrusion if I appear in her territories more than once a day, and the rooms of course are all cleaned when I am out of the way, so that I never see anything of Kitty or Lucy except a flying vision of a dustpan and a white apron retreating in the distance. But their relations are not near us. Mrs. Brewer says it is safer to take young people who have no relations at hand, to come gossipping about the house. I did notice that Kitty's eyes were very red some days after she came, when she came in to prayers. And once or twice I spoke to her when I met her on the stairs. But she blushed so much, I thought she was going to cry, so I gave it up. She had just come from a village in the country."

"Poor village child!" said Lady Katharine,

softly, "at home she had known every one she met, I suppose, from babyhood. And now she is so far away from all—with no danger of any one coming to gossip about mother or father, or the sister who married last year, or the baby-brother who died this spring. So she can work on without being hindered, poor child."

"Aunt Katharine," said Mrs. O'Brien, "you think me a brute."

"My dear," said Lady Katharine, "what language! And of *you* who have a district in the East of London. You a person without a feeling heart! Your only fault, of course, as the formula runs, is that you have 'too much;' and that you cannot find the right kind of poor. With the people in the East of London you have no natural links; and the people who keep your house in order are either not *poor* at all, or are scarcely it seems, *people* at all, but a species of domestic animals brought from the country to be out of the way of acquaintances, and to brush, sweep and scour without let or hindrance. These creatures from the country are not liable to have lovers, I suppose?"

"Mrs. Brewer makes it a point in engaging any one that 'followers' are not allowed," said Mrs. O'Brien. "She says it is so dangerous for people of that kind."

"And so if they have any lovers, they are lovers who are NOT allowed?" pursued Lady Katharine. "Is that kind of lovers less dangerous, Cecil?"

"What are we to do, Aunt Katharine?"

"I suppose people of that kind do marry now

and then," said Lady Katharine, "in spite of the best arrangements Mrs. Brewer can make in engaging their services. At least they do in the country. But then in the country they have mothers to consult, and fathers' homes in which to meet their 'sweethearts.' Cecil," she said, suddenly changing her tone "have you ever asked yourself before God how you will answer it to him, to have taken those young creatures from a mother's care and a father's roof—rough indeed they may be and poor, but a mother and father still—under your roof, without a friend to consult or care about them, away from every one who loves them, who knows everything about them, and to expose them to the risk that the first words of interest and regard they hear shall be from those who are *not* their true friends ?"

"Aunt Katharine," said Mrs. O'Brien, in a faltering voice, "directly I get home, I will see Kitty and Lucy, and as far my counsel or care is worth anything, they shall never henceforth be without a friend."

"Then you have found three natural links at least with the poor," said Lady Katharine, "Kitty, and Lucy, and the gardener. Most strange it always seems to me that people who have men and women from poor families actually living under their roof—eating, and drinking, and sleeping, and waking in one house, meeting at family prayer, perhaps morning and evening, should talk of wanting natural links with the poor."

"But servants do not like being interfered with, Aunt Katharine."

"Who does? I am sure I do not," said Lady Katharine (and it was a proposition no one could controvert). "But who does *not* like to have a real friend? Now," she concluded, testily, "the next thing you will do, Cecil, is to go to Kitty and Lucy, and ask them about their mothers and fathers, and expect them all in a moment to confide the inmost secrets of their hearts to you; and then, if they don't, declare that the English poor are so reserved, so 'impenetrable,' or 'have no sensibilities,' or some nonsense of that kind; at least I don't say *you* will. But many sensitive people who begin to awake suddenly to their duty to their neighbors do, and I only hope you won't."

"But, Aunt Katharine," resumed Mrs. O'Brien, "I was thinking when I began comparing your relations with the poor and mine, of my district in the East of London, and of Mrs. Dee's introducing me to it. You seem to speak to the people—whether you are scolding a little, or cheering, or advising—in a natural every-day tone, as if you were down among them and close to them. Mrs. Dee seemed to me all the time not so much talking as making speeches from a platform above every one. Not only to the poor but to me."

"That last certainly was a grievance for you, Cecil! I hope you folded your hands meekly and were benefited. What did Mrs. Dee reprove you about?"

"She did not reprove me. She commended me. But her commendations are as humbling as her rebukes. She said, as we drove into London, I must

excuse her for observing, but she could not help expressing her decided approval of my dress. She had no idea, she said, of people putting on plain or unfashionable things in going among the poor. She thought it was well they should recognize distinctions, and that the world should see religion did not make people slovenly. Then she told me she was glad to see I did not neglect music and painting. She thought it produced such a bad effect when religious people were narrow. 'We must not bring discredit on our profession by peculiarities,' she said. 'I give my daughters the first masters and mistresses—indeed every advantage, that the world may see religion is not incompatible with taste and education. We must always remember the great cause which we represent,' Mrs. Dee said."

"I detest representative women!" said Lady Katharine. "It is bad enough to live on a platform before one's friends, worse within one's own home, but worst of all to live on a platform *before one's-self*, set up in the midst of one's own heart. I do not know what is to be done with people who are unnatural all through, and yet there is a style of religious people who are in danger of being so. You feel sure that they say their prayers, when alone, in the most elegant language, fit to be transferred without correction from the diary to the press. Well, Cecil, what did you say to Mrs. Dee?"

"I could only say the truth, Aunt Katharine, which was that I was afraid I had not thought of

representing anything or producing any particular effect at all (at least not any moral effect), by dress, or music, or buying pictures, or doing anything else I liked; but simply of my husband's taste and my own. Of course it was not the highest motive. But it seems to me terrible if religion is to make people do these simplest things with the idea of producing some effect, or accomplishing a purpose. It seems almost as bad as the opposite extreme of worldliness. How is one ever really to know people who are doing anything not spontaneously or naturally, but with the purpose of doing you or some one good? All the time I am with Mrs. Dee, I feel as if I were in a theatre, and she were acting a kind of sacred drama for the good of me and the rest of the world. When I take leave of her, I no more feel I have advanced a step to acquaintance with her real self than if I had been seeing her represent Mrs. Hannah More's 'Jochabed.' The sentiments are excellent, the principles uncontrovertible, but of the person I know nothing. And yet, of course, doing good is the highest object to live for?"

"Is it?" said Lady Katharine. "Does not loving come first? Do not *being good* and pleasing God come a little before it? You had better look in the Bible, Cecil, and see. But go on about your district. I suppose the poor did not enjoy Mrs. Dee much more than you did?"

"I am afraid she ruffled a good many tempers. But the people seemed to me wonderfully patient on the whole. I think some of them felt that it

was their duty to pay for her kindness by listening to her exhortations. Besides, no one can controvert anything she says. That is almost the most provoking part of it. She told the people in affliction that tribulation was a blessing. She told the sick people that sickness is a blessing. She told the bereaved that it is a blessing to have our friends at rest. She met complaints and lamentations with admirable essays on thankfulness. Indeed she said so many excellent things that I should feel quite hopeless as to succeeding her, except that there is just one thing she did *not* do, which I think I could. I could *listen*. And that Mrs. Dee never does. She says it would never do to encourage gossip. Some of the people would talk on for ever, if you would let them. Yet, Aunt Katharine, if one does not listen, I don't see how one ever is to know people or to help them. The people must always remain mere arithmetical figures to us, or adjectives without substantives. But, perhaps, if I were to sit patiently by one or two of the sick-beds, by degrees the sick people might talk to me a little, as they do to you, and I might get to know a few of them. Of course it would waste a great deal of time, but my time is not so valuable as Mrs. Dee's, and it does seem to comfort poor people in trouble to pour out the trouble, so I think I shall try."

"I see," said Lady Katharine, "Mrs. Dee is one of the people who travel by railway, always on their own line. Sometimes their rails cross your path, and then, perhaps, they stop till you pass;

or perhaps they don't, and then if you are persistent there is a collision. But whatever happens, they never leave their rails and silently walk with you for a time on your path. Such people get over a great deal of ground, and think they see a great deal of the world; but they only see the world as a colored map, and they only see people as figures in a landscape. I know a little about it, Cecil," she said, laughing; "for I am apt myself now and then to travel in the same way. I generally find it out by a collision; and then for a time I get out, and walk, and learn a little."

"What tried me most, however," resumed Mrs. O'Brien, "were the lectures on management and on contentment, and the tone of superiority."

"The case is very plain—Mrs. Dee is not a gentlewoman," said Lady Katharine, carelessly. "No persons ought to be permitted to visit the poor who have not proved themselves thoroughly well-bred."

"Mrs. Dee is very well-connected, Aunt Katharine."

"Very probably. Most people are in one direction or another. But I was thinking of a standard of good breeding, not to be determined by Burke or Debrett."

For some minutes they had been standing in the library, where Maurice was reading in a deep bay-window.

"There, Cecil, lay your case before Maurice," said Lady Katharine. "He is too great a Jesuit not to be a good casuist. Maurice," she concluded, addressing him, "I really cannot stand that way of

yours of listening surreptitiously behind the screen of that old folio. You know you have heard every word we have been saying for the last ten minutes. Now tell us, what is your aunt to do with Mrs. Dee?"

"I was just reading a passage in Stier's Reden Jesu, Aunt Katharine, which seems rather to the purpose. He says some people, like the rabbis among the Pharisees, have occupied themselves so incessantly with teaching, that they have lost the *divine art of learning*."

"Very well; let that settle Mrs. Dee, Cecil. And now for links with the poor. How is a lady, residing in the greatest comfort in a suburb near the west of London, to acquire natural links with poor people, living in the greatest discomfort six or seven miles off in the east of London?"

"I suppose," said Maurice, "there are natural links between every sinning, suffering, mortal human being, if we dig deep enough for them; and," he added gravely, "there is, I believe, one Mediator not only between God and man, but between man and man—the man Christ Jesus."

Mrs. O'Brien looked up thoughtfully, as if she were trying to see through a telescope, to which her eyes were not accustomed.

There was a little silence, and then Lady Katharine said:

"I suppose that little Grace knows more practically about the matter than any of us. I sent her twice, to her great delight, to take a dinner to old Granny Coxe, the crossest old woman in the parish.

Yesterday, when I called on granny myself, I said, 'Well, granny, how did you like my little messenger?' 'Better than the new parson, at any rate,' replied granny, who never can bring in a commendation except as a seasoning to fault-finding. '*She* can read her Bible plain enough for folks to understand, any way. And I might be worse off than I be, I don't say I mightn't. The apostle Paul was bad off enough, sure, in the stocks; and he and the other did sing. Of course, as I told her, it isn't to be expected a old woman like me should sing; and no one would find it much pleasure to listen if I did. But I might, perhaps, tell the Lord I am pleased with things now and then, if he cares about it, and little miss says he do. I've half a mind to try. *She* sings like a lark.' 'Grace,' I said that evening, 'what have you been doing to Granny Coxe? She thinks you sing like a lark, and are better than a parson.' 'Please, Lady Katharine,' said Grace, blushing, 'I don't remember saying anything particular. But I felt very sorry for poor old granny. It must be so very sad to have got into a way of looking on the dark side of things. The Bible says, you know, we are to bear one another's burdens; and I only tried to help granny bear her burden a little while, and to tell her that Jesus was always near, and always would, if she wished. It must be such a heavy burden not to be able to feel grateful to God.' I said no more to Grace," concluded Lady Katharine; "but I believe she has got to the root of the subject. She just stoops down by the people she wants to help, and takes

up the burden; and in that way she not only lightens the load to them for the time, but shows them the way to lighten themselves."

"Poor little Grace!" said Maurice gravely; "I am afraid she has had too much of helping to bear burdens in her short life."

At that moment the happy sound of children's laughter came in at the open window. There were Harry's boyish shouts and Winnie's laugh ringing up and down among the trees, with those delicious echoes which the merry voices of children make among avenues of old trees and the walls of old mansions. And between these louder sounds came floating now and then a softer sound, silvery and low, yet joyous as either.

"That must be little Grace," said Maurice. "Her smile is often as bright as laughter, but I never heard her laugh before."

And going to the window, they saw the children in an ecstasy of fun, sharing the gambols of a huge Newfoundland and an audacious little bully of a Skye terrier.

"We need not fear that the child's heart is pressed out of that happy, loving, little woman," said Lady Katharine.

"Or ever will be," said Maurice, half to himself. "It is distrust of the Father's heart alone that can press the child's heart out of any of us; not sorrow, not repentance, not care from without, only care from within; and that is distrust of God."

"Not one drawing, Grace, for a fortnight!" said

Maurice, as he was showing her a portfolio of old Italian line-engravings that evening. Mr. Leigh was reading aloud at the other end of the room to Lady Katharine and Mrs. O'Brien, while Winnie and Harry were deep in a game of draughts.

"Please Mr. Bertram, I don't think I could help it," said Grace, apologizing. "I have been getting to know the things."

"What things, Grace?"

"The homes and cradles of all the creatures," said Grace. "I have seen where the limpets live, and the fish. I have seen them browsing on the sea-weed on the rocks, and glancing in and out of the tiny forests under the sea, just as the birds do in the woods on the land. Some of the tiny trees in the pools have little crimson branches, as if it was real fairy-land, and they were cut out of precious stones; and little creatures with heads like stars come and sit among them, and sway their little starry crowns about, and look so at home and happy. If you keep still, and look down and down, it is wonderful what you find out in those clear pools. Being in another world, I suppose the creatures do not mind us, and so are not frightened, but let us look into the middle of their homes, and see them at work and at play. Do you think, Mr. Bertram, that perhaps they really do not see us?"

"I suppose they feel our shadows when we hide the sun from them, Grace," he said, guessing her thoughts. "But why do you ask?"

"Because it would be so pleasant to think they didn't see us. It would help us so much, I think."

"How, Grace?" he asked.

"Because of *our* other world, you know," she said softly, "that we cannot see into. It would help us to understand those who are there watching us unseen. Don't you think so?"

"Perhaps it might."

"Because, you know," she continued, "we are better off than the creatures in the pools with *their* other world. When they feel the shadow come between them and the sun, it must puzzle them so much. They have nothing to do but to creep into their holes till it is light again. But we have."

"What can we do, Grace?"

"Oh, you know, Mr. Bertram," she said, with her sudden smile, "we can speak to our Sun, can't we? And our Sun can shine through any shadow, can He not?"

"Grace," he said, "you are a very happy creature if you have found out this."

"I *am* very happy," said Grace simply.

"And what other cradles and homes have you found?" he said.

"Those of the flowers," she said, "the kind of green banks that the primroses love, and the violets, by roadsides and in deep lanes, and in all the hedges, and on the edges of woods, and in all kinds of sweet, homely, every-day places. And then the ferns; and the large-leaved water-plants breasting the brooks, bathing in them and enjoying the delicious wet, always flowing round them, and over them, and through them."

"And what else, Grace?"

"I have seen the cradles of the rivers themselves," she said. "I know one which bubbles out of the hill-side, in a very tiny cave with a roof of lovely mosses, and has a little floor of sand and pebbles, and then trickles down and begins to sing at once. And I know another more like a real *baby* river, scarcely able to speak at all. You only see it by the green of everything about it, and you only hear it, if you listen very quietly, making a very little soft purring around the roots of the grasses. So now I know what I have always wished to know, what kind of a cradle the river at home comes from, and what kind of a world it is going to in the great sea. And those will be such delightful things to think of always. Indeed I have had no time yet to draw, Mr. Bertram. Painting, even really beautiful painting, seems only to give such a little bit of the outside of things, does it? just the beautiful color and shape. And there are such hundreds of other beautiful things about everything, besides color and shape. All the rustling in the leaves, and the coolness of the rain and dew, and then all the delicious smells and tastes of the air, the salt sea tastes, and the smell of the old fir trees like incense in the sunshine, and of the grass just mown, and of the earth when it has been raining, to say nothing of the flowers, so sweet, and every one of them different."

Grace's treasury was quite unlocked. Mr. Bertram was her oldest friend among her new friends. And he was by nature a listener. And like Winnie, and Dan, and most others loved by

Maurice, she felt he would not misunderstand her.

"I see," said Maurice at length, "you do not mean to draw any more, until you can find some kind of brush or pencil that will paint wetness and coolness, and salt sea tastes, and the smell of roses, or of new-mown hay. When you are at home again then, Grace, will you care no more to see the landscapes in the Academy?"

"Oh, ten times more than ever, Mr. Bertram," she said. "I shall feel the fresh air, and the sweet smells, and everything now, whenever I look at those pictures of the sea, and the rivers, and the birds' nests."

"But you will despair of painting yourself?"

"I do not think I shall," she said. "I think I shall enjoy more every leaf and flower I sketch, now I know about their homes in the woods. It will be like painting portraits of people you love."

At last a wet day came. Mr. Leigh was supremely happy among shelves of Reformation divinity in a rather disused corner of the library. Maurice had been initiating Harry, in the hall, into the mysteries of billiards. Grace and Winnie were busy copying flowers. The methods of the two little artists were as different as their characters. Winnie dashed at once into the midst of her operations, and had drawn and rubbed out numbers of outlines almost before Grace had begun to use her pencil.

"What are you doing, Grace?" she said.

"I am beginning to see it all," said Grace, "I can never draw anything until I begin to know it, and it makes itself into a picture in my eyes."

Winnie evidently thought this a weak and slow proceeding; but soon Grace began, and before long she had made a graceful, delicate outline, and was ready to color, while poor Winnie's paper was so rough with corrections that it was doubtful if it would take color at all.

"It is very strange, Grace," said Winnie, "that things will not come right to-day;" the wilfulness of things being an established article of Winnie's creed.

Grace's pencil was laid aside in a moment, and a few encouraging words and hints soon restored Winnie's hopefulness, and set Grace free for her second little contemplation of the flowers before trying to paint.

In this she was speedily so absorbed that she was conscious of nothing until she heard a sudden tearing of Winnie's hapless paper, and felt a flushed little cheek pressing against hers, not without tears on it.

"I am not jealous, Grace!" said the faltering little voice. "Oh, I am so glad! I feel sure I am not! I do so love you for being so clever and doing everything so beautifully. If God has not made me clever, Grace, you know I cannot help it, can I? I will just sit still and look at you. And oh, Grace, I am so glad, I feel I like it. And I am more glad of that than if I could draw like you. Because I don't think jealous people like to see

other people do things better; do they, Grace? And Rosalie said I was jealous. And, oh, I do hope I am not. Grace," she continued reverentially, "you are a genius. Rosalie said so. I feel sure you are. But if you should ever have crowns put on you, as Rosalie says they do sometimes to geniuses in the Capitol at Rome, you won't forget me, will you? For I do love you so dearly."

Grace was so entirely confused between Winnie's outburst of humility and affection, her vehement destruction of her morning's work, and the vision of her own flower painting ending in anything so exceedingly disagreeable as to have to sit on a platform at Rome with a crowd of people gazing at her, that she could not at all collect her thoughts.

Happily Maurice had entered before the conclusion of Winnie's speech, and he took the matter into his own hands. First, he looked with no small pleasure at his little sister's bright, earnest, truthful face. There was such unfeigned love and delight in it as she looked at Grace and her drawing, that he said to himself: "She has reason to be glad. Love has slain envy in her heart, as only love can." But he knew that little eager, impetuous heart had many a lesson yet to learn. And taking up the torn drawing he said:

"Who could be so stupid as to tear this? It is the best sketch, Winnie, you ever made."

"I am never going to sketch any more," said Winnie; "I am going to look at Grace."

"A very profitable employment, I dare say," he said; "but suppose Grace were to give up drawing

also, and take to looking at Michael Angelo? Don't you think," he continued, turning to Grace, "that it is rather presumptuous for any one to attempt to paint in a world where there are pictures by Raphael and Michael Angelo?"

Grace thought a minute, and then she said:

"It is so difficult to help sketching beautiful things when you see them. And then doesn't it make us enjoy the great pictures more? Besides," she continued softly, "ought we to think if we are doing better or worse than other people? Ought we not to try the best we can?"

"But it is not every ones' duty to be an artist."

"No; but it is every one's duty, isn't it, to use what God has given them? It isn't only the roses and the thrushes, is it, that make the sweet sounds and the sweet smells which make the summer? It is all the little chirpings and breathings that help, don't they, down to the grasshoppers, and the very little blades of grass?"

"I think they do. The world would be very poor in music if all the second best was left out. We should have no choruses, Winnie, only one or two great solos, now and then. I think one great lesson in humility is to do our very best, when we know it can only be second best. It is harder to do second best then than to do nothing. And now I will tell you a parable by a poet older than Homer:

"'The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said to the olive-tree, Reign thou over us.

"'But the olive-tree said unto them, Should I

leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honor God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?

"'And the trees said to the fig-tree, Come thou, and reign over us.

"'But the fig-tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?

"'Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, and reign over us.

"'And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?

"'Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, and reign over us.

"'And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow.'"

"That is no new parable, Maurice," said Winnie. "It is in the Bible."

"It is: a good deal of the Bible is older than Homer, you know. But you see it is only brambles who set their hearts on being first. The trees which bear fruits are too busy in doing their best, to think of being first."

"Maurice," said Winnie, "I shall put this poor torn drawing together and gum it on a card, and finish it as well as I can, and put it on the wall of my own room. I am not going to be a bramble. The shadow of a bramble, conceited thing!" she added laughing. "Oh if I cannot be any thing better than a bramble, Maurice," she concluded softly, rising and drawing his hand over her forehead, "I

will be busy about my blackberries, and you and Grace shall be my vine and my fig-tree, and I will look up and delight in you both."

And Maurice said softly:

"There is a country where the fruits most prized are not works of art, but works of love; or rather, not works at all, but the love that inspires them. Love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness. When we get there, Winnie, we shall see which were the blackberries, and which the grapes. Till then we will each do the best we can."

Happy days those were at Combe Monachorum to the children, each day a life of delight; mornings eager in schemes, noon-tides busy in fulfillment, evenings rich in recollections. Harry growing into a daring manly boy, Grace shaking out the folds of her too careful childhood and gliding into a joyous happy child. Winifred, on the other side, in her great love and reverence for Grace, beginning to rise from the petted child into the womanly considerateness of Grace, and into the high loving heavenward aim which Grace unconsciously blended with every thing. So all their characters were moulding each other, as loving intercourse does always mould, not into copies of each other, but each into its own perfection.

But at length the last day came, the last scramble over the rocks, the last ramble through the great woods, the last lingering on the cliffs, looking out at the last sunset over the purple sea.

Winnie was sitting with Grace on the short

grass, twining her arms around her, very plaintive, and ready to cry on the smallest incentive.

"But there is one difference, Winnie, you know," said Grace, after a silence of some minutes, "between this sea and the Sea of Galilee. That sea had another side."

"I wish this had," said Winnie, with a little moan seeing the image of her great sorrow of the morrow in everything. "It is quite dreadful here to-night, looking on and on into nothing. It is just what I shall feel to-morrow, Grace, when you are gone." And she burst into a passionate flood of tears.

"But there is another side to this sea, you know, Winnie, really," pursued Grace, who had been too much accustomed from that first day of her mother's funeral, to repress her own feelings and to soothe other people's, to be very easily moved to tears. "There is another side to everything that troubles us, only our sight does not reach far enough to see it."

"Then it is just as melancholy for us as if there were none," sobbed Winnie. "To-morrow seems like the end of everything—of everything."

"But it is only the beginning," said Grace, tenderly, "you are not going to give me up, Winnie."

A fervent kiss and a sob were the only possible replies.

Then after sitting some minutes in silence, while Winnie's tears spent themselves a little, Grace said:

"I am so glad, Winnie, the Bible does not give us the ends of things, but only the beginnings."

"Oh!" said Winnie, "are you? I know it must be, but I always wish it didn't. I do so want to know what became of the people."

"But we shall know," said Grace, "the Bible makes us know the people. And by-and-by we shall know all their stories. Because, you know, it is not a book of stories, but a book of introductions to our friends."

"But," said Winnie passionately, "I shall not want to have so many new friends in heaven, Grace, I shall want the old ones, you, and Maurice, and Aunty, and all. And if you were to care more for the people in the Bible than for me, I am afraid I should not be happy at all. It would be very dreadful," she concluded, "to be jealous of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; only of course if we were all in heaven, I shouldn't be jealous, Grace, so I needn't trouble myself about that need I?"

Grace did not answer for a moment, and then she said very tenderly:

"I think God will love us so very much in heaven, and we shall love him so very much, and each other, that there will be no room for jealousy."

"It will be *each other*, Gracie? Not all good people only, but each other, you and I will it not? There will be so many! Yet we will not forget each other, or lose each other, shall we?"

"If we did, it would be just the same as losing ourselves," said Grace, in her quiet way. "And I do not think it would be living at all, it would only be dreaming, forgetting from one time to another what we were and what we did, as we do in our

dreams. This world one dream, and the next another dream. And God never meant that."

Winnie was satisfied. And so ended the last conversation at Combe Monachorum.

The tea-table was spread in Mr. Treherne's lodgings, in Mrs. Treherne's very best china teaservice;—the brown curtains fell in heavy discordant masses, on the gaudy carpet, uncovered for the festive occasion of the return of Mr. Leigh, and Grace, and Harry.

"I didn't order a fowl, Miss Grace, although you wrote," said Mrs. Treherne, "the man wanted six shillings a couple, and I couldn't abide that you should be so imposed on. If he would have taken off threepence, I might have bought it, but he would not be beat down a penny. But I have got a beautiful tender steak, my dear. And it'll be ready in no time."

For six weeks Grace had been freed from all housekeeping cares, and all thoughts of the cost of anything. The disputed threepence brought her down at once to the old fetters twined of ten thousand Lilliputian threads. She felt ashamed to feel what fetters they were.

So she had recourse to a remedy very usual with her. Sh went to her room and locked the door, and when she had got ready to come down, she knelt down and prayed through the Lord's Prayer. "After this manner pray ye," He had said, and she tried to obey, applying the deep, simple words to the circumstances of the moment. But with the

first words her heart rose with such a spring, she scarcely needed to go further, "*Our Father.* Yes it is *Thou* that orderest all; ten thousand little cares are but the pressure of Thy hand. *Thy will be done*, now—to-day, by me, to me. *Give us this day our daily bread.* It is not purchased with threepence then but *given* us, just the very best for us, direct from Thee our Father in heaven."

So it happened that when Grace went down to make her father's tea, she felt not bound by the cramping chain of ten thousand Lilliputian fetters, but bowing under that happy yoke beneath which the lowly walk at liberty.

And the smile with which she returned little Fan's torrent of courtesies, as she stood in all the importance of a new white apron carrying up the steak, was such a sunbeam of a smile that little Fan felt it as good as a kiss.

And when Mr. Leigh, tea being removed, sat down by the fire with Grace at her sewing beside him, and the rain pattering on the window-panes, and Harry drawing out his treasures of shells and stones on a tray on the table, and the large black cat, sleepily winking at the fire, and purring to herself, "Now the world is going on again, and I am in the middle of it, in the warmest place," and (unmindful of discords between carpet and curtains, or any discords else), Mr. Leigh said, "Ah, Grace, after all, there is no place like home," no visions of stately halls, and free sea-shores, and beautiful woods, broke the echo of those words on Grace's heart. She looked round

at her mother's work-table, and at Harry's ancestral desk, and at the old square piano under which they had made lions' dens, and up in her father's face, and felt how wonderfully happy she was to have so many to love, and two such dear ones of her very own to live for, and plan for, and give up things for. And she said:

"Ah, father, I suppose the grandest palace in the world may be a home, if people love each other there. Inside all the state, I suppose, people make each other a home. But we have no outside courts, have we? Our home is home all through."

But neither Mr. Leigh nor Grace knew how much of that home was made the home it was by the little loving, truthful heart within it, that was at rest all through.

Chapter IX.

GRACE LEIGH'S reception, when she came back among her old friends, was very varied. Mrs. Treherne was decidedly impressed by the fact of her lodgers having been the guests, as she said, of a "lady in her own right." The second reflection of this glory on herself had, indeed, not a little increased her conscious dignity at sundry tea-parties. But when she was actually brought into contact with the first reflection in the person of Grace, her own dignity, inherent and acquired, paled sensibly before so near an approach to the source of the light, so that her manner to Grace, for the first two or three days, at least, had a certain awe in it, not natural to Mrs. Treherne. Miss Grace had been waited on by butlers and footmen; Mr. Leigh had had his boots blacked by the person who blacked the boots of an earl's grandsons; Miss Grace had been driving in a carriage and pair, if not in a carriage and four, and had been eating off plate, there could be no

doubt, and had seen the table served in a manner which would certainly throw into the shade even those tables of the first families in Whitechapel, on which Mrs. Treherne's knowledge of the world was founded. All which glories could not but leave their traces on Miss Grace herself, very much like her former self as she appeared.

Miss Betsy Lovel, on the other hand, also appeared to have been removed to a little distance from Grace by those weeks at Combe Monachorum. At least so it seemed at the first interview; but quite in a different way from Mrs. Treherne. What were earl's daughters, or butlers, or carriages and pair, or plate, or any such vulgar distinctions, to one of the Lovels of Downwardshire, whose mother had been in the habit, in her childhood, of playing every day with the granddaughters of an Irish viscount?

Miss Betsy, therefore, if a little distant to Grace at their first meeting, was distant by virtue of her comparative elevation. She kept a little on the high and dry elevation of first principles, and took occasion to assert, grandly, for Grace's good:

"A gentlewoman is a gentlewoman whether she is a governess or a duchess."

And when Miss Lavinia mildly opined that a certain degree of respect might be conceded to a duchess without compromise of dignity:

"My dear Lavinia," said Miss Betsy, decisively, "you are an excellent woman, but you know nothing of the world, and I should be sorry for Grace to take up foolish notions. People cannot be more

than well-born and well-bred, and if they are less, we have nothing to do with them."

"Except, perhaps, as human beings and fellow-creatures," remonstrated Miss Lavinia feebly.

"Who was talking about fellow-creatures?" retorted Miss Betsy, a little sharply; "we were speaking of social distinctions. If you come to fellow-creatures, of course a shoeblack is my fellow-creature, or a grasshopper."

"I beg your pardon, sister," replied Miss Lavinia, "I thought you *were* speaking of worldly distinctions. I thought you wished Grace to see how empty they are."

"Really, Lavinia," said Miss Betsy, driven to extremities, "you *are* sometimes a little pertinacious and provoking. I was not speaking of *worldly* distinctions, but of *social* distinctions, which, of course, must be recognized (although they may belong to our fallen nature), if the world is to hold together at all. There is a self-respect quite distinct from petty pride, which I should be sorry for Grace or any of us to lose. If Lady Katharine were to look *down* on us, it would show she was no gentlewoman. If the national schoolmistress, or the wife of that butcher who has retired to Hackney and keeps a phaeton, were to consider themselves on a level with us, and not to look *up* to us, they would show they were vulgar, ignorant people. Nothing can be clearer."

Nothing could be clearer to Miss Betsy, as to so many on various social levels, that between them and all beneath them there is a great gulf which

cannot be crossed, whilst between them and those above them there exist only those petty distinctions which no right-minded person thinks anything of.

Meantime, during this discussion, Grace was sitting apart, "seen and not heard," pondering many things in her mind.

"Gracie, what are you thinking of?" said Miss Lavinia at length.

"I was thinking of something Mr. Bertram said," replied Grace, hesitating a little.

"About what?" said Miss Lavinia.

"About people despising each other."

"I am sure, my dear, I despise no one," said Miss Betsy, quickly; "not even the butcher's wife or the schoolmistress. They are very worthy people, no doubt, in their way; only, of course, they ought to understand their position."

"What did Mr. Bertram say, Grace?" asked Miss Lavinia.

"He said contempt was the meanest and smallest thing in the world, because it keeps any heart in which it reigns from ever growing or learning; because it never looks up to see anything above it, and only sees what is lowest in things below it. He said people imagine themselves standing erect, when they despise others, and looking down, with heads drawn back, with a lofty scorn. But he thought, to heavenly eyes, the attitude of the contemptuous heart is always a mean stooping, which lowers them below the lowest of the people they despise. Because, he said, there is something in every one to honor, if we could find it out; but con-

tempt passes by all that could be honored, to look at that which is lowest. He said, too, that contempt and envy are very often only the inside and outside of the same sin. People profess to despise what they inwardly envy."

"Did Mr. Bertram say that in a sermon?" asked Miss Betsy, growing a little impatient; "if he did, you have remembered it very nicely, my dear."

"No," said Grace, "he was talking to Lady Katharine and Mrs. O'Brien about visiting the poor; but what I remember best is what he said about the ladders."

"Tell us about that, Gracie, if you remember," said Miss Lavinia.

"He said there were two ladders, or stairs. One is up the great mountain of the world; and as the people who are climbing up this ladder have two constant aims—one to keep those below from getting up to them, and the other to reach the next step themselves, while those who are *not* climbing but are obliged to stand still on a particular step, are always trying to prove that between them and the next step *below* there is an impassable barrier, while between them and the highest summit *above* there are nothing but little insignificant steps. And, after all, those who have reached the very top, know that the summit is nothing but a *last step*—nothing but an *empty platform*, and no better for building on than those below—only more exposed to the storms which *destroy* buildings. Then Mr. Bertram said there is another ladder, like the old dream-ladder Jacob saw, reaching from heaven to earth. And in

all that great stair, he said, there is no break or chasm except at the top. From the archangel to the sea anemone, all is one stair of gentle steps without a break."

"Something very like a break between us and the monkeys," suggested Miss Betsy, vaguely combating some vague suspicion of a new theory concerning the origin of species.

"Mr. Bertram said it was not a slope, but a stair, and, of course, some steps may be higher than others," replied Grace; "but the only *chasm* is at the top, and that is immeasurable, for it is between God and the highest of his creatures. But that chasm has been altogether filled up," said Grace, very reverently, "since the Son of God, the Lord Jesus, became a little babe, and grew up to man, and died, and rose again for us; so that now there is no chasm at all. But on this stair people are not thinking of *climbing*, but of *worshipping*, or of helping up those below. For they are altar-stairs. And the law which rules the company there is, '*Be ye subject one to another.*' So that the people rejoice to recognize every distinction, even poor earthly distinctions. The young are subject to the old, and the poor recognize the gifts of the rich, and those who are not clever delight in the gifts of those who are. They are helping those below, and honoring those above. And so Mr. Bertram said," concluded Grace, "the whole happy company are always rising higher and higher towards heaven, and nearer and nearer God."

"Surely," said Miss Betsy, fidgeting a little, and

just perceiving the meaning clearly enough to try to miss it, "surely Mr. Bertram did not mean to say that money and rank, and such poor, worldly things, were of any value in God's sight. There is no respect of persons with him; and I am sure Mr. Bertram is too good a man not to see that."

"Oh, sister," said Miss Lavinia, taking courage, "what Gracie says is just what I feel. I do think it makes us so much happier to recognize every little distinction of money, or rank, or ability, or anything, just as so many steps of God's ordering. I feel so much freer with people when I simply say to myself, 'Now you are wiser, or richer, or higher up in the world than I am; but I am as much in *my place*—that is, *God's place for me* here—as you are there;' than if I were trying to think their gifts are nothing, and to stretch up and feel as tall as they are."

"Well, well," said Miss Betsy, "*I* was taught to believe, at all events, that these little differences ended in the grave. I must say I am surprised that Mr. Bertram should carry them into heaven; and I cannot say I think it quite reverent to talk of an archangel and a periwinkle, or some creature of that kind, in the same breath. But I know I and the Church Catechism are old-fashioned and out of date now, according to some people's notions."

When Miss Betsy, figuratively speaking, took the bit between her teeth in that way, and ran away on the wrong road, Miss Lavinia well knew that the only way to bring her back was to make no effort to stop her. Accordingly, she checked Grace, who

was preparing for an eloquent vindication of Mr. Bertram, by opening a little book of dried seaweeds which Grace had brought her as a present; and by the time they had looked admiringly through every page, Miss Betsy had brought herself up; and, before Grace left, she said:

"Mr. Bertram is an excellent young man, Grace, my dear, and of course a little girl like you could not be expected to remember everything exactly, although, I must say, you told it all very prettily. Of course we all do recognise differences of station. I was only anxious you should not attach too much importance to petty distinctions of rank and wealth. And, of course, Mr. Bertram acknowledges that these differences have only to do with time and temporal things."

"Even the distinction between the butcher's wife and ourselves," suggested Miss Lavinia.

"Undoubtedly, if the butcher's wife does her duty in that station of life to which it has pleased God to call her. Only, of course, we cannot understand it now. We shall all of us have to undergo such a great change when we leave this world. You are a good little girl, Grace, and have done those seaweeds beautifully, and are above being spoiled by the notice of those whom vulgar people think great. I am sure Lavinia has her own ideas; but to me, I confess, these differences are of no importance whatever."

And yet Grace instinctively felt that Miss Betsy's lofty scorn of these "petty distinctions" implied far more value for them than Miss Lavinia's con-

tented recognition of them, or even than Mrs. Anderson's reverence for ancient pedigree, when she said, "I do feel glad, Miss Grace, you have seen something of the real old families. It's such as they I'd like to see you amongst always. Not but that there are names in the country made little of now, that can be traced further back than any Lowland lord's. But that's nothing to the purpose. The Lord putteth down one and setteth up another. And there are names," she concluded, solemnly, "written in another Book which is older than either, and will last longer."

To little Fan, in her low place in the world, all the minor gradations of society were as much lost in the distance above, as to a despotic monarch in the distance below. Both counted the rest of the world in "masses." To her, the lady who kept the greengrocer's shop, and the Miss Lovels, and Mrs. O'Brien, and Lady Katharine, were all blended into one indiscriminate mass of superior people who had to be courtesied to.

Grace noticed that little Fan had rather a frightened and subdued look, as she waited on the tea-table the first evening of their return; but she said little to her until the first afternoon when Fan could be spared for the hour's sewing-lesson, which was her great holiday twice a week. Then, to Grace's surprise, almost at the first kind word she spoke to her, asking about Dan, Fan burst into tears.

"What is the matter, little Fan?"

"Nothing isn't the matter, Miss Grace. Only

I'm so glad you're back again. I've done so many things wrong since you were away."

"What kind of wrong things? can you tell me, Fan? Perhaps I might help you. We all do wrong things sometimes; and then the right way is to start again."

"Not wrong things like me," sobbed Fan. I've got such fingers, like butter, missis says. "I've broken three mugs and four glasses, and a bottle, and the great pie-dish with the pie in it. Missis says it's more than my work's worth in a year, and she don't think I shall never be no better," sobbed Fan, "never. She had a girl, she says, once before like that, and she turned out dreadful, and was sent over the seas. She says I shall be like her, if I don't mind; and oh! Miss Grace, I do mind. I do try, and I don't get no better. The more I try, the more the things seem to slip through my fingers. I seem to hear missis' voice saying, 'There you go again,' and somehow my fingers won't hold, and down the things go. And then I lie awake, thinking of the girl who was sent across the seas. And I pray to God, Miss Grace, I do. I ask him not to let me break anything more. I asked him last night so hard; and this morning, the first thing, I heard missis calling quick, and I broke the milk-jug; and she come and says there's no hope I shall ever mend. And I don't suppose there is. And oh my! I shall spoil my apron with crying, and I had two clean last week. There never was such a careless child, missis said, I spill things so;" and she made a great gulp to stop the

tears which were running fast on her checked apron.

Grace wiped the tears away, and pondered in her mind how best to comfort Fan without making too light of her offences, when Fan looked and said in an awed voice:

"Please, Miss Grace, they have to do a good many things besides breaking and spilling things, haven't they, before they're sent to prison and across the seas? It would be such a disgrace to Dan, he'd never get over it, Dan wouldn't."

Reassured on this point, Fan was prepared to receive the consolation Grace was able to give.

"Fan," she said, "I think I may tell you that Mrs. Treherne spoke very kindly of you. She said you had everything to learn, and, of course, you have. And she said you had broken several things, but not as many as some. And she said you were so gentle and kind to the little ones, and swept out the rooms so nicely into the corners, she should certainly try to keep you, and she believed you might one day make quite a nice little housemaid."

The tears stood still in Fan's eyes with amazement, and then they gathered again into one more little sob of delight, the last.

"Me a housemaid, Miss Grace! Missis said that of me?"

For Mrs. Treherne's principles of education were all in the way of prohibitions and threats. She would have thought it a most imprudent concession to tell little Fan one half of the good things she had said about her to Grace. She believed, as

many people do, that fear was a stimulus, and hope a soporific, and that the most impressive way of urging any one to overcome a fault is to tell them they never will. Little Fan, however, being accustomed to believe evil things of herself, and having seen a good deal of the dark ends of evil ways, had taken Mrs. Treherne literally, and but for Grace's timely encouragement, might have sunk for life, under this wholesome discipline, into a hopeless resignation never to overcome anything wrong, or do anything well. Grace, on the other hand, having no theories of education, but having proved, in her own experience and in Harry's, that the most difficult thing in morals is to repair the languor of frequent failures, and to give the impetus to start again after failure, bent her whole powers to persuading little Fan that she would be sure to succeed in the end if she tried; and at the end of the hour, when she asked Fan:

"You won't think it no good to ask God to help you again to-night, will you, Fan?"

Fan smiled and nodded a promise, and whispered, "Then you really think, Miss Grace, I may grow up not to be a disgrace to Dan? For Dan's to be a shoemaker; the baker's loads were too many for him, and Mrs. Anderson's been and got him bound. Oh, Dan's such a good lad, Mrs. Anderson says."

And Fan's eyes sparkled with hope and love, as she went to get the tea-things, with a steadier hand than she had known since Grace had left home.

"Oh father," said Grace that evening, "how glad I am we are at home."

"So are the old people in the workhouse," said Mr. Leigh. "One of them said that while I was away no one had done anything for them but read the service and a sermon once a week, and stand at the door of the wards, and smile, and hope in a general way they were all comfortable; and I can, at all events, go and listen and talk to them one by one. It does seem, Gracie, sometimes as if we were in the right nook in the world, instead of in the wrong; although, of course, Cousin Felix can't be expected to think so; and I do wish for your and Harry's sakes I had been a more successful man. However, if Harry gets that scholarship, perhaps things may not turn out so very badly after all."

For the annual visit to Bedford Square generally threw its shadow over Mr. Leigh at least a month before, and it was already November.

That year the visit was certainly not more cheerful than usual. Mr. Hunter threw out sundry plain suggestions as to the advantages to be obtained from aristocratic friends, if they really were friends worth the name, and had not merely taken you up by way of passing a dull season, or investigating a new phase of society, as they might an African explorer, or a book about the manners and customs of London thieves, or any other instrument by which they might obtain glimpses into spheres beyond or below their own reach. It was true (Mr. Hunter said in a confidential communication with Mr. Leigh after dinner), that the Reform Bill had seriously lessened the influence of families like the

Wyses, by sweeping away their rotten boroughs; but there were livings still in their gift, he knew, and Lady Katharine's connections had the disposal of two or three of the largest livings in England. Mr. Leigh, he knew, had scruples of conscience against asking for anything; but *his* ideas of conscience were that a man's first duty is to provide for his own. Of course it was not pleasant to ask for things; it was very unpleasant to be refused, and not always very pleasant to receive; but duties are *not* always pleasant, and men with families and without property had to do many things that were not pleasant, or else their sons and daughters would have to do things that were more unpleasant still; and he must confess the men *he* respected were those who had the self-denial to sacrifice petty scruples of conscience, or of pride, or whatever you like to call it, and expose themselves to the risk of rebuffs rather than lose the chance of obtaining benefits for the family. Altogether, Mr. Hunter succeeded in so working on Mr. Leigh's conscience that on rising from the table he felt that another visit to Combe Monachorum would be almost as depressing as a visit to Bedford Square, since he would be divided all the time between his own abhorrence of encroaching on any one, and Mr. Hunter's code of the duty of his turning everything to the profit of Grace and Harry.

Meantime Mrs. Hunter had been practising a great amount of dignity on Grace without producing any corresponding effect. She had (quite parenthetically, as if the Combe Monachorum episode

were something that had scarcely occupied her thoughts) informed Grace that the Wyses were a family very little thought of in those lofty unknown circles into which she soared altogether beyond Grace's ken; that Lady Katharine's father was only the fourth earl, and that the less said about the circumstances to which her ancestors owed their elevation to the peerage the better. All which information had no more personal effect on Grace than a dissertation on the origin of the Hohenstaufen, or on the comparative merits of the Guelphs and the Ghibellines, Lady Katharine's dignity in Grace's eyes consisting in her being a very open-hearted and majestic old lady, who looked like a queen, and behaved to her like a very indulgent grandmother, and who, if her father had been the fourth earl or the four-and-twentieth, deserved herself to be the "first countess" in the land. She felt sorry certainly that Lady Katharine's great-great-great-grandfather had obtained his peerage in a way that was not to his credit; but the only conclusion she could draw from this fact (if it were a fact), was that Lady Katharine must be unlike her great-great-great-grandfather, or that the family must have improved generally since the days of the ancestor who had better not be talked about; which Grace thought was a pleasant thing to think, because if they had begun they might go on improving; in which case no one could say to what degree of excellence the four-and-twentieth earl might attain.

But Grace did not say this to Mrs. Hunter. She

only listened until Mr. Hunter and her father appeared, and the Hunter parents branched off into a responsive discourse illustrative of the merits of the various Hunter children who had not yet returned from school, Mr. Hunter enlarging on the exalted opinions of the abilities, and the lofty hopes of the destinies of those remarkable young people entertained by their various tutors and masters; and Mrs. Hunter treating all these attainments and promises in a grand style, as no more than must in reason be expected of her children, and as the mere alphabet of the glories reserved for them in the future.

Then Mr. Hunter took the lamp, to show his poor relations some pictures which he had recently purchased at an enormous price, or as an enormous bargain, although, of course, he said (rather ironically), "you would not think much of them after the gallery at Combe Monachorum, which, I believe, cost the late Mr. Wyse and his father fabulous sums."

Mr. Leigh felt tempted to apologise for having seen finer pictures at Combe Monachorum, but Mrs. Hunter said loftily, "My dear, you talk as if the Wyses were something out of the common. I believe their pictures are no more than may be found in thousands of private houses."

"Mamma," said a little voice from an invalid chair by the fire, "I think Combe must be a beautiful old place. There are cedars as tall as the chimneys, and a hall as large as a square, and such beautiful horses, and miles of woods. Cousin Harry has been telling me all about it."

"I daresay it was a great contrast to Harry, my dear," said Mrs. Hunter with a magnificent smile. "I hope you did not feel the return to your lodgings too much, Grace," she added.

Grace colored a little; but there was no cloud of pride on the smile in her eyes as she looked up in Mrs. Hunter's face, and said:

"We were very happy at Combe, Mrs. Hunter; every one was so kind. But we could not help being glad to be at home again, they were so glad to have us back. And then, you know, it is *home*, and the people were so glad to see father again."

"Yes," chimed in the feeble voice from the fireside, "the people in the workhouse, mamma, they love Mr. Leigh so much. They were so pleased to see him again, Cousin Grace says."

"In the workhouse, Maud!" said Mr. Hunter, "you do not know what you are talking about. The people in the workhouse are paupers. No one ought to be pleased about anything in a workhouse, for no one ought to be there. If people were only provident and used their opportunities as they ought, no one would be there. Every one ought to be ashamed of being there; and I am happy to say, such is the generally high tone of feeling in the country, almost every one *is* ashamed to be there."

"But there are the blind people, papa," said the feeble voice, "and the lame people, what are they to do?"

"There are blind asylums for *respectable* blind people," replied Mr. Hunter; "but, my dear, these

questions are beyond a little girl's comprehension."

Mrs. Hunter summoned Grace to play a duet with her, Mr. Hunter took up the *Times*, and Mr. Leigh and little Maud were left to a private chat, as he seated himself beside her.

For even in Mr. Hunter's household there was one unsuccessful person. Little Maud, the youngest child, had in some unaccountable way so far forgotten herself and her representative duties as a Hunter as to have had very feeble health from infancy. A model nurse, moreover, had so far forgotten herself as to let her be upset in a perambulator, and twist her ancle; and the inaction caused by the crippled limb had increased her natural delicacy, so as to make her a confirmed invalid.

Always at these annual visits Grace had contrived to say a few loving words to Maud, which had quietly sunk into the little sufferer's heart, and made that dreaded annual visit anything but dreaded by her. But hitherto little Maud had been much lost sight of among the older children, and besides, this was the first year when her invalid chair had been removed from the nursery to the drawing-room, so that Maud and Mr. Leigh were that evening making each other's acquaintance. The words that passed between these two were very few and simple; but they made that house a different place to Mr. Leigh from that hour.

"You have suffered much pain, Maud, I'm afraid," said Mr. Leigh, looking at the little thin face, and into the eyes that had so little sparkle in them.

"Not so very much, and not always, Mr. Leigh; only sometimes when the wind changes, or I try to move too quickly. But it isn't the pain I mind," she continued.

"No," said Mr. Leigh, as if he understood it, "it isn't generally pain that is the worst thing."

"And it isn't only being unlike the rest," she added, after a little hesitation, "it is because I am so stupid."

"But perhaps you are mistaken about that," said Mr. Leigh, "we can seldom judge that for ourselves. Very clever men sometimes have thought themselves stupid until they found out the thing they could do."

"But I am not at all clever," was the reply, with a hopeless little movement of the head. "They have tried me in everything, and they have never found out the thing I am particularly clever in. I don't get on; every one says so. I don't do anything as well as the rest. Papa says it is very strange, because it is generally made up to people for wanting one thing by having more of something else. I have heard him say so once to the German master. But I haven't more of anything. It seems as if there was some mistake about it; and of course it must be *my* mistake; but I don't know how to get right and get on. And that is what I care for more than the pain."

The child spoke with slow gravity, as if she were unfolding the long perplexities of years, not so much with a hope of solution as because it was a relief to unfold them.

"Yes," said Mr. Leigh, half to himself, "a strain is often the worst pain."

The child looked up.

"That is what I feel," she said, "a pain all through, such as I feel in my bad ancle when I try to move it."

"God does not mean any of us to feel that, Maud," said Mr. Leigh gently. "No one does feel it when they are doing His work; but only when we are setting our tasks for ourselves."

The child looked intently in his face, but said nothing.

"The Lord Jesus does not say, 'Get on,'" he said, "but 'Follow me.' He does not want us to do as *well as other people*, but as *well as we can;* and then He is quite sure to be pleased. He wills all His children to bring Him their work every evening. Some of them have done things which will be talked about and praised while the world lasts, and some have done what no one thinks anything of, perhaps cut the grass in the Square garden, or borne a bad ancle patiently, and done a few lessons as well as they can. But God is quite as pleased with one as with another; God sets us here not to do wonders, but to learn lessons. We are to do the wonders by-and-by."

"Then you don't think I ought to be cleverer than other people, or do something wonderfully well, to make up for being so small and lame?"

"I think God will give you something more to make up to you if you ask Him."

"I have asked Him so many times," said Maud,

"to make me sing beautifully, or draw beautifully, or something; but I can't."

"God has better things than these to give you, Maud," said Mr. Leigh.

Her thoughtful grave eyes brightened into an inquiry.

"Love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, those are God's best things, Maud," said Mr. Leigh.

A new look of rest came over the thin little eager face, making it quite beautiful; not a smile, but a calm, as of a limb strained in every muscle subsiding into soft curves of repose.

And Mr. Leigh left Bedford Square that evening as quiet and peaceful as if he were returning from his evening service on Sunday. For he and Maud had been preaching each other a sermon, which made it quite clear to Mr. Leigh for the time that both his lodgings over the greengrocer's, and the house in Bedford Square might be steps of a stair, where going straight forward *is* "getting on" always.

When Mrs. O'Brien had asked Lady Katharine's advice about the best way to do good to her poor people in the east of London, Lady Katharine had said:

"I had some advice given me by my French master, when I was a child, which has often helped me since in other ways. 'If you wish to learn to read,' he said, '*read;* if you wish to learn to speak, *speak;* if you wish to learn to write, *write.*'

So, Cecil, I say to you, If you wish to learn how to assist the poor, *assist them;* if you wish to learn how to do good, *do good.* The only way to learn to do anything is to do it; and, of course, that implies that before you learn to do it right you will do it wrong. You will make blunders, you will make failures; you are very fortunate if you do not do mischief; but persevere, and in the end you will learn your lesson, and probably a good many other lessons by the way."

With which counsel Mrs. O'Brien had to be content, and to launch herself on the sea of experience. Mr. O'Brien, who was many years her senior, looked on these new experiments of his wife with much the same lofty and pitying interest which he had shown for her fernery, her aviary, her rock garden, or any other of the schemes which had occupied her from time to time. A little more dangerous, he thought it, inasmuch as the experiments were made with more unmanageable materials. If Mrs. O'Brien killed her birds or her ferns with kindness, less mischief was done, he thought, than by her pursuing the same process with human beings. However, in this matter Mrs. O'Brien had evidently advanced in her own opinion from the domain of taste to that of conscience; and with conscience Mr. O'Brien was far too liberal-minded to interfere. He rather inclined, indeed, to the belief that "charity" is one of the eccentric influences which prevent "social science" from working itself out effectually; but he candidly admitted that, constituted as things are, it is perhaps hopeless in our genera-

tion to see the social system work quite as steadily as the planetary; that there actually are other eccentric influences of a more irregular and pernicious kind than "charity," and that as long as there are some human beings "eccentric" enough to do nothing, steal, murder, or kill themselves with drinking, it might be as well there should be other human beings eccentric enough to spend their lives in counteracting the disorder thus introduced, although by disorderly means.

He therefore only entered enough of a protest to give him a right, when Mrs. O'Brien's plans failed, to say with an air of serene superiority, "My love, I am not surprised."

And it must be confessed Mrs. O'Brien's plans did fail very frequently. Starting with Mrs. Dee as a danger-signal to show her where not to go, and with the old maxim of believing every one an honest man until you prove him to be a rogue, her errors were not on the side of incredulity or want of tenderness. From Mrs. Dee's extreme of exhorting from a platform, she fell into the other of regarding poverty and trouble as a kind of dignity and consecration in themselves, raising the sufferers on a platform, which she must approach with a delicate reverence, even when the suffering was, too obviously, the result of mismanagement and improvidence. "How could I manage," she thought, "to maintain a family on eighteen shillings or a pound a week? and what right have I to wonder if this poor man cannot? How could I be housemaid, laundress, nurse, cook, needle-woman to a

husband and half a dozen children, as these poor mothers have to be? and what right have I to lecture them if the children's faces are not always washed, and the floors not always swept? How could I make everything comfortable for my husband with only one room to live in; and what right have I to judge a poor delicate woman if she does not?" She did not at once perceive that while souls and bodies are the same in all classes, and therefore everywhere heart answereth to heart, the effect of circumstances on souls and bodies is infinitely varied by habit and association, and that therefore what would be "straits" to one, is absolutely wealth and a "large room" to another. Thus she frequently returned from her visitations more exhausted by sympathy than the sufferers she sympathized with were by their troubles.

Then, as to "giving," after some months' experience, she was almost tempted to come to Miss Dalton's conclusion that it was impossible to give without doing at least as much harm as good. It would have been a relief if she could have at least have adopted the theory that alms do good to the *giver*, whatever the effect on the *receiver*, and have looked on the poor as a savings bank in which to invest for heaven. But she could not divest herself of the conviction that doing harm, with the best motives, will not count the same as doing good in any day of account. Besides, she really cared for the people, and it distressed her beyond measure when she found that money given to clothe a

family, mysteriously fallen into hunger and nakedness, had gone through the wretched mother's hands to swell the source of their misery at the next gin-shop; or when she discovered that her benefactions had been encouraging an idle man in idleness, and making the hard-earned bread of the neighboring family seem earned more hardly still; or when she found the spirit of complaining only grow with the donations it fed upon.

Many a bitter lesson she had to learn about others, starting from the belief that the poor and afflicted are generally better and less selfish than the rich and prosperous; passing through the dreary fear that they are *more* selfish, *more* mean, *more* jealous, *more* corrupt; till at length she landed in the conviction that human nature is the same broken and imperfect thing everywhere, only that perhaps the cracks seem wider where the glazing does not cover them.

But Mrs. O'Brien had bitterer lessons still to learn about herself. Brought into contact with various forms of suffering and sickness, she learned how very little she had learned, how little she knew what to suggest, or what to do, or how to help. She began to see also how, in her own household, she had all her life been doing her duties by deputy, and been content to stand merely turning the handle of a machine, when she might have been the centre of a home.

But she began to perceive a want deeper still than any of these. As she sat by the bed-side of the sick or the dying, and anxious questioning eyes

were fixed on her, she began to feel there was a question asked she had not yet herself asked, and an answer needed which she had not yet learned.

The necessities of really poor districts so soon surpass the capacities of the fullest purse. Mrs. O'Brien could dispense coals and meat in hard seasons, undertake the charge of families rendered destitute by sickness or bereavement; she could, by a little constant relief, enable the aged to keep the luxury of a home instead of sinking into units in a workhouse. But when it came to slack seasons, long frosts, failure in the particular trade of the district, and working men, accustomed to earn at least one pound a week, and barely to support their families on that, were thrown out of work for weeks together, the limit of her means of assistance must at last be reached, and beyond money and sympathy she had nothing to give. So soon she reached the bounds of her poor human power to comfort and assist! So many broken hearts were there, and her balms scarcely reached to soothe, and had no power to heal! So many lives torn by great earthquakes of sorrow; and could she fill the chasm with her tears, or bridge it over with gentle words?

Many a time she returned from her work exhausted, as if every drop of life and power had been drained out of her heart; and yet feeling that all she had felt and spent had scarcely availed really to lift up one of the sorrowful hearts whose sufferings so weighed on her. It is a tremendous thing to venture down into the depths of human misery with none but human aid to offer, and without a

firm faith that the ideal of life is not a parade or a party of pleasure (still less a bower of rest), but a battle and a pilgrimage. It is to go into a besieged city, perishing with famine, with proclamations of assistance, and have nothing to give but our own daily loaf of bread. It is to stand before the nation in the wilderness, fainting from days of drought, and to offer them to drink from the few drops left in the pitcher which we have brought by the same journey with the rest from the same wells. It is a perilous thing to come to the nation in bondage with words of sympathy, and promises of help unless we ourselves have first been in the wilderness alone with Him who is mighty to save, and heard His voice and received His promises, and proved His power.

"*Bear ye one another's burdens*" will soon bring us to the end of our strength unless we have first proved—unless we are daily proving—"*Cast* THY *burden on the Lord, and he will sustain thee.*"

Through this exhaustion and helplessness Mrs. O'Brien was passing, sinking deeper with every effort to lift others out.

Yet Lady Katharine's advice had been right. She was learning the lesson in doing the work; and many other lessons by the way.

Many bitter tears she shed in secret over her incapacity and helplessness. She mourned over the precious years of wasted youth, and wasted early womanhood, never she thought to be regained. Precious years of training for the sacred uses of life, lavished on training to be the ornament of a

drawing-room. She mourned over her own empty home. The weakest and most ineffective mothers must, she thought, have learned lessons in their nurseries, by watching the development of their children's characters at their play, and at their lessons, and on sick-beds, which no one could teach her. But that path led too far down into bitter depths of murmuring to be pursued. And she came back to her own neglects. Winnie had been sent her. She might have taken the little one to her heart, taught her, watched her, learned from her. But she had deputed the care of her health to an experienced nurse, and of her mind to teachers and masters; so that the child, who might have been a link for her with the hearts of other women, had been to her little more than rather a perplexing pet and plaything. And what power, human or divine, can give back wasted years? She felt as if the greatest blessing would be some convulsion which would shatter the smooth, barren surface of her life, and enable her to make a new beginning, even though it were amidst ruins.

But unknown to her, all this while, a strong hand had been shattering the smooth, barren surface of her life. She *was* among ruins. And what she needed was not the earthquake or the whirlwind, but the still small voice, a little grain of living seed, and the soft breath and dew of life.

In all these conflicts Mrs. O'Brien was alone. Many people indeed volunteered consolation and advice when she dropped any little expression of disappointment. One lady advised her to send

relief to the poor by her maid; these sad scenes were evidently too much for her nerves. Another said it was no wonder people should find work altogether out of their province too much for them; women were to be almoners, religious instruction and consolation should be left to the clergy. Mrs. O'Brien would have been only too happy to leave religious consolation to any one who could give it; but her difficulty was where the consolations of religion were to begin. It seemed to her that she was continually encountering, in the commonest trials of life among the poor, something too deep for her words of comfort to reach, and if she were to call in the clergymen whenever words deeper than expressions of ordinary kindness and sympathy were needed, she would require a chaplain always at hand to supplement her labors. Not on dying beds only are the consolations of religion needed, or something stronger than a little money or a little pity; but *every morning*, when it is not clear where the daily bread is to come from, or the daily strength for the daily work, *every evening* when the hard working husband, out of employment, comes home from a weary, fruitless search for work, or when the reckless, well-paid husband comes back intoxicated on the wages which were to have bought the children bread.

Miss Dalton watched with a cynical satisfaction Mrs. O'Brien's disappointments, and observed that she had gone through it all long since, and proved what a set of impostors the London poor are. The more you give, the more you may give. Again and

again she had found that poverty was the result of hopeless thriftlessness and improvidence, and that charity was a mere encouragement to vice. She had gone through it all, and had come out of it, and she trusted Mrs. O'Brien would soon attain the same result. But it was precisely the dread of going through the experience by the same path and coming out of it *on the same side* as Miss Dalton, hardened, narrowed, chilled to the heart, that almost more than anything gave Mrs. O'Brien courage to struggle on.

For in all that really made this experience bitter Mrs. O'Brien was quite alone; in her disappointment in human nature, in her far bitterer disappointment with herself. And yet she had a library of religious biographies of all schools; and a far more instructive Library of human biographies collected in one Book. Footprints were before her all the way, footsteps were beside her all the time. And yet, like all the rest, she went her solitary way to the Door of Life, thinking herself on an untrodden path, feeling herself in an unbounded wilderness.

Happy for those whose first experience of spiritual loneliness, of destitution of human companionship, of the unutterable isolation of the spirit from all human spirits, is made on the way to the Gate of Life, not in the valley of the shadow of death.

Meantime, the year, with many rebuffs and recoils, was struggling from winter into spring. Trees, and flowers, and green herbs, and birds were battling for their lives with stormy winds, and

chilling snows, and nipping frosts; while underneath the great mother earth was gently resting, having a perfect understanding with storms, and snows and frosts, that they were only to assist her in the education of her children, peacefully feeling how the frosts were destoying their destroyers, while the winds made them cling tighter to her breast, and the snows penetrated slowly down, renewing all the springs of her life and theirs.

For the earth had known at least six thousand springs, and many of her children but this one, which made all the difference.

A very happy spring it was for Grace. Harry had been moved into a higher class at school. The autumn holidays had wonderfully restored Mr. Leigh. She had been taking lessons with Winnie from time to time of Rosalie and of a German master, and also in water colors of a celebrated painter of flowers. Every day she felt gaining a step in something, consciously growing. For Grace was one of those artist-natures who are able to rejoice in their work. Never thinking she had "already attained," yet nevertheless each step towards attainment was to her a new joy. Seeing the distance before her to be absolutely infinite, she was yet able to think of each advance on the way to it not as a missing of her ideal, but an approach to it. And her ideal being not other people's ideals, or other people's attainments, but simply God's reality, she scarcely knew which was the greatest source of happiness, to feel the beauty of his creation always so infinitely above her, to feel herself

drawing nearer to it. "Comparing ourselves among ourselves," must always be narrowing, either with the contraction of depression, or the meaner contraction of contempt. Comparing ourselves with Divine standards is always expanding. It exalts while it humbles. Indeed, but for the tender little pang of fear that she was leaving her old friends, the Miss Lovels, behind, Grace's delight in her new means of progress would have been unmixed. One day, however, an understanding was established between the friends on that subject which set Grace at rest about it forever. It happened that on the morning of this day Miss Betsy had been saying to Lavinia:

"What a pity Grace should devote so much time to painting little bits of leaves, and berries, and insignificant flowers and birds' nests. If they were camelias and greenhouse flowers, or even roses and geraniums, it might be something. I wonder she should sink into such child's work, after having really made some very tolerable copies of your landscapes."

But Miss Lavinia said:

"Sister, I would rather be able to do one of Grace's primroses, than ten of my landscapes. And I would rather see that dear child do them than do them myself. Life is before her, it is not before me—at least not the greater part of it."

"Well, well," replied Miss Betsy, "I only hope you won't spoil the child. Of course there will be fashions in every thing, and if you can go with them perhaps it's all the better. But I can't bear to hear you undervalue yourself, Lavinia. It's

hardly fair, either, to your drawing-master, who was the best papa could get. I shall always think mountains, and lakes, and trees better worth drawing than hedge-flowers and birds' eggs. And if every one takes the same fancies, what is to become of our school? There are two pupils less this half than last. And one of the parents wanting to dictate to me how to teach geography like the national schoolmistress—another fighting to have the guineas reduced to sovereigns. And if they begin to fancy their children are to draw primroses, birds' nests, etc., instead of painting on velvet and drawing lakes and mountains, what is to become of us?"

Poor Miss Betsy spoke with not a little of the bitterness which is apt to be infused into art criticism when daily bread and theories of art become too closely connected.

"At the worst," said Miss Lavinia, smiling, "we will ask Grace to paint *us* a nest of one of 'the fowls of the air,' and hang it up opposite the breakfast-table, with the text belonging to it underneath."

And Miss Betsy went away to her daily purchases, wondering at her sister's victories of faith, and quite unaware that in her way she also was winning victories, while, proud yet generous woman that she was, willing to have lived on bread and water rather than have done anything to betray their poverty, she encountered the contemptuous glances of tradesmen to secure a little better bargain and a little choicer meal for her invalid sister at home.

"Sister," said Miss Lavinia when she returned

triumphant with her purchases, "perhaps poor little Grace may have herself to depend on her own earnings some day. Mr. Leigh sometimes looks very frail. And I do feel thankful she is getting a better education than we could give her. You know fashions will change, and it is a comfort to think she may have a better chance than we have."

"Poor child, poor child!" said Miss Betsy, "God knows I grudge her nothing. And it will always be a comfort to think we laid the foundations, if she was obliged to set up a quantity of flimsy new-fangled things on the top of them."

At that moment the "young ladies" began to arrive, and the sisters had no more conversation until the interval of dinner.

Miss Betsy had just put the cold mutton away for the second time, and calculated that with a pudding it might last till the end of the week, and had with peremptory affection placed her sister on the sofa, when Grace Leigh's sweet clear, girlish voice was heard at the door, and in another instant the dingy prosaic lodging room was brightened by the quiet radiance of her face, always like something in the open light of heaven, but at that moment positively brimming over with some repressed inward delight.

There was always something infectious in Grace's happiness. She had a way of making people feel it was only a drop from a fountain common to all, a smile from a love embracing all, and to Lavinia Lovel she had always been the treasury of that motherliness which is at the core of the heart of all women who have hearts, and who have not fallen

into the suicidal delusion of making pets of themselves. With Miss Betsy, Lavinia herself had occupied the child's place, and Grace rather that of a niece, the child of a sister dear to her, to be faithfully educated, a good deal advised, and also loved, but by no means to share Lavinia's indivisible inheritance of affection.

The sight of Grace's happy face, therefore, at that moment, brought a light on Miss Lavinia's, as near a glow as anything on that shadowy countenance could be. Very different the two faces looked as Grace went over to the sofa. Both pale in coloring, but one pale as a gray reflection in a steel mirror, or as if all the tints had been mixed to a slightly varied neutral on the pallet before they were laid on; the other pale as a blush rose is pale, but with every tint delicately distinct; from the hair, with the gold shining on the rich brown, to the soft glow on the cheek, which was as distinctly the glow of health and pleasure as if it had been the brilliant flush on Winnie's face, but which another shade of depth would have brought out of harmony with the pure whiteness of the smooth, even brow. Very different—as an alabaster lamp is different from a dull earthenware one; yet with the same soft light of love and peace shining through both. And since it is the alabaster and the earthenware that are to perish, and not the light, the resemblance was more permanent than the difference.

"Well, Grace, what is it?" murmured Miss Lavinia, in that faint shadowy voice which contrasted

as strongly, though in a different way, with Grace's clear, low, even tones, as with Miss Betsy's rather elevated treble.

In reply to Miss Lavinia's surprise, Grace drew a long old-fashioned netted purse out of her pocket, and out of the purse a five-pound note.

"A present, Grace, from your new friends?" said Miss Betsy.

"Oh, no, Miss Lovel! better than that," said Grace. "It is my very own—I earned it. It is for the primroses and the apple-blossom."

"Lady Katharine or Mrs. O'Brien bought it then, I suppose," said Miss Betsy, a little stiffly. "It was very kind. It must be quite an encouragement to you."

"No, please, Miss Lovel, it was my drawing-master," said Grace, coloring and fluttering a little. "Mrs. O'Brien knows nothing about it, nor any one. She is so kind, you know, I could never have asked her. I was alone with him one day before Winnie came, and Harry's clothes have been so dear, and his school-books and everything lately, and father was troubled about his being able to go on paying. So I ventured, and asked him if he thought my drawings would ever sell. And he looked at me first as if he were puzzled, and then said, as if to himself, 'Curate? Ah, poor curates! always in difficulties, always have ten children! I see.' But I told him we were only two, and had no real difficulties, and I only wanted to know, because Harry had to go to college to help him, if he could, and I must be a governess one day, and it might be bet-

ter if I could do the drawings at home. Then he looked at the last drawing I had done, and put in a few touches, and said, 'There, say you are my pupil, and ask what you can get for that.' But I said I had no one to ask, and besides it was not mine. Then he smiled and said, 'A conscience too! A brother at college, and a conscience! Too much for any one little pair of hands to manage at once. Very well, since you won't let me interfere, take it home and see what you can do next week by yourself.' And the next week he took my drawing, and nodded at it, but did not touch it, and took it away, with the last I had done before. And the next week," concluded Grace coloring "he brought me this, and gave me a letter to a person who has a shop, who, he said, would buy more. So it really is like a fortune, and I could not help telling you, because you are my own dearest, oldest friends."

And Grace kissed both the Miss Lovels, and Miss Lavinia looked at her with a fond, motherly pride; and Miss Betsy, a good deal touched by the child's confidence, but also not a little nettled at the art-blindness of the century, said:

"Well, Grace, my dear, I am sure you did right to tell us. Some people are fortunate, and I am sure I shall be very glad if you are one. And, of course, there's no disputing about taste, and people will buy what they fancy. When I was a little girl young ladies did not sell things; I never thought of offering Lavinia's drawings for sale! but, of course, times change, and you are a very good little girl to wish to help your father, and I

only hope, for your sake, this fashion for primroses and birds' eggs may last."

Which speech of Miss Betsy's would have made it very difficult for Grace to bring out the next thing she had to say, had not Miss Lavinia added:

"Sister and I are so very glad, Gracie. We shall thank God for you in our prayers to-night, both of us. It must seem more His very own gift, Gracie, than anything. When rich relations leave us money, or rich friends give us anything, it comes through other people's hands, and we have them to thank as well as God, but what God gives us through the work of our own fingers and brains comes straight from Him, doesn't it? because no one but God gave them to us."

"Yes," said Grace, looking down and hesitating a little, "no one but God gave them, Miss Lavinia; but without you, I should never have known how to use them. That is just what I wanted to say. Would you be so kind as to change this for me? Because, you know, it is half yours."

"Half ours!" said Miss Betsy, "what can you mean, Gracie?"

"Oh," said Grace, "please, father says there is no doubt of it. You always said, Miss Betsy, when we were rich you would let him pay for my lessons, or that I might help you when I grew up, and now this is just the same."

"Why, Gracie, how can you prove that?" said Miss Lavinia, in a faltering voice, "five pounds is not quite a fortune, and certainly you are not quite grown up yet."

"Not quite grown up, Miss Lavinia," said Grace, "but I shall be my next birthday but one, for then I shall be sixteen. And it is not the five pounds that is the fortune, but the person at the shop, you know, who will buy more. Father says it is quite plain," concluded Grace, decisively, "as far as my education would have cost is a simple debt, and after that we can talk about it; and I am either to bring it to you as I receive it, or to put it in the bank in your name. Father said it is God's gift to us all. He said God had sent it you for being so good to me, and to me for being—" and there Grace's voice broke down. And the three friends wept together, Miss Lavinia and Grace in silence, as if they enjoyed it; and Miss Betsy with spasmodic demonstrations with her pocket-handkerchief, as if she were ashamed of her tears, and was determined to get them over as soon as possible. In spite of which controversy with herself, her feelings entirely got the better of her, and when Miss Lavinia was restored to composure, Miss Betsy and her pocket-handkerchief were still fruitlessly contending with her emotions, until at length she burst into an uncontrollable wail, and sobbed out:

"I am sure God never sent this to me because I was good to any one—never! I'm sure I've been as wicked as Ahab in my heart; I'm sure, Gracie, I've worried and coveted about your primroses and birds' eggs as much as ever he did about Naboth's vineyard, and I shall never forgive myself—never! I did think the world was cruelly unjust to Lavinia. I do still, and I don't mean, my dear, that I ever

shall think birds' nests equal to landscapes with skies, and trees, and rivers—it is not to be expected—but I ought not to have felt as I did, and I shall never forgive myself to my dying day. I know it isn't good for a little girl to speak to you so, my dear, but I can't help it. If you never respect me any more, Gracie, I can't help it. All the scorn in the world hasn't half such a sting as praise you don't deserve, and I couldn't bear it."

Grace was far too solemnly impressed with Miss Betsy's emotion to attempt any consolation. But when the next time they were alone, Lavinia said:

"You will not misunderstand Miss Betsy, Gracie. There is not a more generous heart in the world. Her only fault is thinking too much of me."

Grace answered:

"Oh, Miss Lavinia, I was always grateful to Miss Betsy, but I never quite ventured to love her in my very heart, until the other day."

It was not without a little further struggle that Miss Betsy Lovel consented to accept any portion of Grace's earnings. Lavinia, trying things by her simpler rules, had no difficulty on the subject. "It was a delight to help Gracie," she said, "and, of course, it would be much pleasanter never to be paid; but it is God's will that we want it, and that she can give it. And we must do as we would be done by." And considering the value of Lavinia's instruction in accomplishments, Miss Betsy was at last persuaded to receive a fifth of the money paid for Grace's paintings, until the fifty pounds which

she declared was ample payment for her education had been paid.

On the strength of the first sovereign, Miss Betsy recklessly insisted on lavishing eighteen pence on an expedition, partly by boat and partly by omnibus, to St. James' Park. It made one feel one was an Englishwoman, she said, to walk once more by the Admiralty, and under the great gates of the Horse Guards. Miss Lavinia, also, had her own tender, shadowy associations with Somerset House; and as the sisters subsided on one of the seats near the pond, and watched the beautifully dressed children feeding the ducks, certainly not one of the children there had for the moment a simpler enjoyment of life than the two antiquated-looking old ladies who watched them. Probably, indeed, there were few of the little miniature representations of the *Modes de Paris* there that day who would not have looked down on the simple old ladies for their ignorance of the world and its ways.

Miss Adela Hunter, at all events, was decidedly of that way of thinking, as she manifested very plainly when, having seated herself for a few minutes with her maid beside Miss Lavinia, that lady addressed a few mild observations to her in a soft and chirrupping voice concerning the ducks and the sunshine, Miss Adela vouchsafed no reply but a lofty stare of inspection, which made Miss Lavinia quiver all over with a nervous terror that she had put on her bonnet wrong, or her shawl inside out, or made some other preposterous mistake in her toilette, and which drew from the belligerent Miss

Betsy some laconic moral observations on good breeding, addressed abruptly to her sister.

"Think what impertinence," said Miss Adela to Mr. Hunter, on her return home, "a person in an old brown-black silk bonnet, and a cloth cloak which looked as if she had made it herself, and ridiculous corkscrew ringlets right on each side of her face, and cotton gloves, and no crinoline, ventured to speak to *me* on a seat in St. James' Park!"

"Of course you know how to check such an intrusion," said Mr. Hunter.

"Yes; I hope so, indeed. I looked at her quietly for a minute or two until she blushed and did seem to feel what a liberty she had taken; and another person beside her, with a small old-fashioned shawl hung on her round shoulders like a peg, and a great vulgar hair brooch set in silver, and a black straw bonnet, such as no servant in our house would have worn, and her dress so short I saw the tips of her rusty old boots as she was sitting, actually began to talk *at* me about young ladies having been taught good manners when she was young, but now, she supposed, when every shopwoman who could buy a silk dress called herself a lady, things were altered."

"I hope you did not condescend to make any reply, Adela? Where could these people have come from?"

"I don't know, I am sure," said Adela; "from underground somewhere, I suppose."

But little Maud interposed:

"Did they look old, Adela?"

"Old, of course they did; worse than old—elderly. Two abominable, antiquated old maids."

"But perhaps they were poor, and could not help not having prettier clothes," said Maud.

"Of course they were poor," said Adela. "Then what right had they to speak to me? Besides, they were worse than poor. They were what nurse used to call 'shabby genteel,' which is what every one despises, nurse said, poor and rich, alike."

"Perhaps the poor old lady with the ringlets meant to be kind, Adela," continued Maud. "I hope she was not very much vexed at your looking at her in that way."

"I hope she was vexed enough to learn not to do it again," retorted Adela, and Maud kept the rest of her compassionate thoughts to herself.

In the mean time it was not until after one or two turns by the park guns, and the sight of a cavalry officer careering through the park, had reminded Miss Betsy of her connection with the great institutions of her country, that her temper recovered its calmness.

"An impertinent, conceited little upstart!" said Miss Betsy, as she took her seat beside her sister again. "I have no doubt her grandfather swept out a shop." With which oriental denunciation of the offender's ancestry, Miss Lovel rinsed out the last drop of vengeance from her heart, and was free once more to enjoy the sunshine and the holiday.

Miss Lavinia, on the other hand, clothed in the impenetrable soft armor of humility, had been en-

tirely unpierced by the shafts from Miss Adela's scornful eyes, and being once reassured as to nothing being wrong in her dress, had dropped back into the current of her meek and grateful thoughts.

"Whose grandfather swept out what shop, Betsy?" was her ungrammatical and rather absent reply to her sister's last observation. "I was looking at the water-fowl. What beautiful arrowheads they are making on the water. Only look at them crossing the deep green reflections with those sunny lines."

"Yes, my dear; it's just like your picture of the Lake of Geneva, and you are just like an angel; but it's a blessing you have got a poor old woman like me with a little spirit to take care of you. I do think it is, Lavinia, as we haven't got into the millennium yet."

Grace Leigh was sitting at a table in the window eagerly using the last relics of daylight for her drawings, when a soft knock was heard, at the door, and a faint little petition in Fan's voice to be allowed to come in. Grace thought it was probably some fresh offense of poor Fan's uncertain fingers, or some other small confidence, but she knew it betokened an interruption, which would consume the little remaining daylight, and she was at that moment putting the last delicate touches to the petal of a daisy. At first she was tempted to proceed with her work, giving meanwhile a parenthetical attention to Fan. But she was used to consider other people's affairs of at least as much im-

portance as her own, and she had moreover a belief that interruptions were often more directly the Master's real daily work for us than the tasks we set ourselves; so after one momentary lingering look at her almost finished flowers, she decisively laid down her brush, rose from the table, and went to speak to Fan and let her in.

But when Fan appeared all regrets about her own lost time vanished from Grace's heart at once. So woe-begone was the little face, the eyes, now dry, so red and swollen with weeping. Grace took the cold little hand and held it in both hers, and with the touch the flood of Fan's tears and words was opened at once, and she sobbed out:

"Oh, Dan, brother Dan, he's got the throat! And missis won't let me go nigh him."

"Where is he, Fan?" said Grace.

"In the hospital," said Fan; "and missis won't let me go. She says I should catch it and die. But what would it matter to me, or any one, Miss Grace, if Dan don't get better? Oh, Miss Grace, do ask missis to let me go, and do please get me in. I would do anything, or I would do nothing all day, and never speak a word, if they'd only let me sit by Dan's bed and look at him. He's my own brother, Miss Grace," she said, bursting into a sense of her womanly rights, "my own brother, and he's no one but me, Dan hasn't, and I've got a right, more right than missis or any one, to go to him. Oh, don't let them keep me away."

It was some time before Grace could make Fan understand that the barrier which kept her from

Dan was not "missis' will," supreme as that appeared to Fan, but all manner of medical and social regulations entirely beyond the control of Mrs. Treherne or Mr. Leigh.

When at last Fan began to perceive that she was separated from her brother not by an arbitrary will which might be softened or persuaded, but by an immutable impersonal wall of rules and prohibitions, no more to be melted by tears than the walls of the hospital itself, that it was not cruelty but necessity which kept her from Dan, she ceased to weep; but a stony look of hopelessness froze over her face which Grace had no words to meet. Before those stony barriers the very heart of poor Fan seemed to turn into stone. And Grace could do nothing but draw the little still, cold form close to her, and kneel down with her arm around the child, and have recourse to the one remedy she used for all her troubles. "Say it after me, dear Fan, if you can," she said. And she began: "*Our Father.*" "Our Father," sobbed Fan. "*Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth.*" But there Fan broke down. "I can't, Miss Grace," she whispered. "Oh, please, Miss Grace, I can't. Suppose it should be God's will to—to," and she could say no more.

Grace was perplexed for an instant, and then she said: "Then we will go back, Fan; we will go as far as you can. *Our Father*," she began again, and again little Fan sobbed "Our Father," "Our Father," over and over again, and could get no further than "Our Father," and "Oh, Miss Grace;

our Father! poor brother Dan! Oh, brother, brother! *our Father!*"

And Grace thought God would understand, and would take that for poor Fan's prayer; so she said no more. But they knelt together, and their tears fell together as Grace drew the child's face to hers, until Fan's sobs were quieted, and Grace said softly, "For our Lord Jesus Christ's sake," and they rose, and Fan was comforted; she could not have told why, she could not have spoken the words, Thy will be done; but Grace hoped that God would take Fan's "*Our Father*" for the same. To say "Our Father" from the inmost depths of the heart, Grace thought, is to say all that prayer can say. Little Fan had once more penetrated through the iron barrier of things to the living will of a living Person, and not an arbitrary will, but the will of perfect wisdom and love.

They had stood for a few minutes together, and Grace had just read to Fan the story of Jairus' daughter from the Gospels, while Fan's sobs had gradually lulled, when Maurice came in to see Mr. Leigh, and Fan left.

Grace had been planning in her own mind how it could be managed to get an interview with Dan; but being herself nearly as much in the dark as Fan as to hospital regulations, she had arrived at no definite purpose, and she would not on any account have spoken of any such hopes to Fan unless she were sure they could be fulfilled.

Maurice entered into Fan's troubles at once. "I will go this very evening," he said.

"There is infection, Fan says," said Grace.

"Then it is just the case for me," he said. "You know I have no Mrs. Treherne at home, with little children, whose lives might be endangered. Besides, Dan is my friend and parishioner."

Grace looked perplexed and distressed.

"But there is Winnie, Mr. Bertram," she said.

"Do you think I ought *not* to go, Grace?" he said. "What would you wish Harry to do in my place?"

She hesitated an instant, and a shade came across her face; but then she looked up with a soft determination in her eyes, and said:

"I think I should wish Harry to go, Mr. Bertram."

"And I am sure you would, Grace," he said.

He moved to leave the room, but at the door, he turned back, and said:

"Is Harry getting on with his Greek and Latin?"

"Not very well, Mr. Bertram," said Grace, with a look of distress. "He doesn't like it; and I am so afraid he never will. But I must not despair. I do so want Harry to be a clergyman, Mr. Bertram; and if he does not get on with the Greek and Latin, how can he?"

"Does Harry wish to be a clergyman?"

"I hope he does—I hope he will," said Grace, a little doubtfully; "he does try, indeed, to do what he thinks father and I like; and by-and-by I do hope it will be his very own wish. Harry is not at all thoughtless—not careless about religion, Mr. Bertram," she concluded, as if she feared she had been accusing him.

"But every one who is really and truly religious need not be a clergyman," he said.

She looked troubled.

"But I want Harry to be the very best thing," she said.

"The very best thing," he said, "is what God means us to be, is it not? And God does not mean every one to be a clergyman. You will not be like the vine on the ruined temple column, will you?" he added, gently, answering an anxious look that saddened her face.

"The vine on the temple! what is that, Mr. Bertram?" she asked.

"Only one of Winnie's parables," he replied. "A vine had entwined itself around the column of a ruined temple in a palace-garden. One night a hurricane swept over the land, and threw down the portion of the roof this column had supported. The next morning the vine hung drooping around the column. The gardener came round and looked anxiously at the fading leaves. At first he thought the storm must have broken it; but root, and stem, and branches, all were firm and healthy. 'What ails this vine?' he said; and an answer came rustling back to him from the drooping leaves: 'We have failed in the work the Master gave us to do. We were set here to support the temple-roof, and the roof has fallen. We have failed in our work.' Then the gardener smiled, and held up a ripening cluster of rich purple grapes, and said: '*This* is the work the master set thee to do, and *thou hast done it.*' Then a thrill of new life stirred through every

twig, and the sap flowed freshly through every little cell and fibre."

Grace looked thoughtful, as if the lesson would take her some time to learn.

And Maurice went down stairs; but before he reached the lowest step he turned back again and said:

"Mr. Leigh will not expect to see me again for some little time. I do not think anything of the danger of infection, but some people do, and I must keep clear of my friends for a time."

His voice was very cheerful, but Grace felt as if the closing of the door as he left the house were the falling of a weight on her heart. Her memory went back through all the years since she had crept through the snow, a little trembling child, to ask Mr. Bertram's help for her father; she thought of the many desponding hours he had lightened for Mr. Leigh; of the many difficulties through which he had helped Harry to struggle; of the many encouraging words he had spoken to her. And then she thought of the little sister who loved him with such entire devotion; how Winnie would watch for him at the garden-gate, and not see him for so long, until she felt like a traitress for saying a word to induce him to venture into danger on account of Dan. Then her thoughts went back to little Fan and the Lord's Prayer, until the words which had been too much for poor Fan's courage rang once more through her heart, not, this time, in trembling accents of submission, but in ringing tones like a trumpet-call to the field of battle. "*Thy will be*

done, thy will be done!" said Grace. "It *must* be done—Dan *must* be helped. Oh, our Father, give us grace to do it. Give Winnie strength to choose that her brother should do it."

And then Grace went back to the old poems of her childhood; to the plains where the heroes fought, while the women and the old men watched from the walls; and she thought, "Andromache could not have loved Hector as she did, if she had not known he would *not* yield to her prayers, and desert the field. And Winnie will be as brave as Andromache. I am sure God will strengthen her to be. For this world is a battlefield always—the Bible says so; only the women's part of the battle has to be fought very often, I suppose, in their own heart, watching from the walls."

So the very next morning Grace went to tell Mrs. O'Brien and Winnie about Dan, and to ask Winnie's forgiveness for telling Maurice, and to comfort her concerning Maurice.

Mrs. O'Brien looked very grave when Grace told them about Dan. There had been many cases of death lately from diphtheria, and she was not quite sure as to the necessity of Maurice visiting him; so that Grace apologized, and said:

"I did not think of Mr. Bertram's going to the hospital when I told him. I only wanted him to tell us what to do."

But Winnie interfered:

"But you would have told Maurice if you had thought he would go, wouldn't you, Grace?"

"I think I should," said Grace, a little timidly.

"I hope you would forgive me, Winnie. But it does seem right for him to go—at least Mr. Bertram thought so."

"Of course Maurice thought so," replied Winnie, her eyes flashing and her cheek flushing; "and of course I think so; and you will think so too, auntie. I am sure I would not have had Maurice not go for the world. What is he a clergyman for if he is not to help people when other people cannot, and when they want it most, like Dan? Only I do wish I were a woman, that I might go too."

There was no occasion to cite examples from the Iliad to Winnie as to the place of the heroes. As to the place of the women, she was not quite so clear; for when, a little while afterwards, a letter arrived from Maurice, saying that he found Dan's was a very bad case, making light of the danger of infection, but saying he thought it better not to see Mrs. O'Brien while he was continuing to visit the hospital, Winnie's courage rather failed. The kindling eye was softened with tears, the determined lips quivered, and she said:

"Oh auntie, let me go at once to Maurice's house. If he cannot come here, please let me go to him; because, you know, if he came to be in the least ill, I *must* go, auntie, and I might as well go at first—don't you think so?"

But Mrs. O'Brien was entirely of a different opinion. It was her duty to Winifred's parents, she said, to keep her from seeing Maurice until all possible risk of infection was over. And gentle as

Mrs. O'Brien's language was, Winnie found her determination on this occasion firm as adamant.

So she also, like little Fan, had to begin her experience of the woman's share in the battle—the invocations in the Temple, and the watching from the walls.

Chapter X.

THAT night, while the little sister in the garret was sleeping the sweet sleep of the laboring, with little Sally Treherne's hand nestling in hers; and while the little sister at the Cedars had at length fallen into tranquil slumber with her flushed cheek resting on the pillow, underneath which lay her mother's Bible; each with tears of loving anxiety on her face, and with the peace of childlike prayer in her heart, there was no sleep for Maurice or Dan. With fearful rapidity the mysterious disease had drained away the springs of the poor lad's life, and nothing but continued stimulants kept him from sinking into faintings, out of which the doctor said he might too probably never rally.

Maurice had remained with him. Such a faint tender return of Dan's old bright smile came over his face when Maurice came, and such a wistful despairing look had gloomed in his poor hollow eyes when he was about to leave, that he had not the heart to come away at all. Having obtained permission to share the watching, he wrote a hasty

letter to Mrs. O'Brien, and then crept quietly back to the sick-bed to do what he could there.

It was no time for words or for "spiritual ministrations." Beds of dangerous sickness seldom are. All the bodily strength is needed to bear the remedies. All excitement is forbidden, and if it were not, the mind, weakened with the body, has seldom power for anything but a childlike instinctive clinging to old familiar truths, or rather to *long-trusted love*. Alas for those who at such times have no instincts, or half-instinctive habits, of renewed spiritual life to guide them!

But with Dan, Maurice felt sure those truths and that love were not now first to be sought or proved. It was, therefore, a great perplexity and distress to him when once he ventured to whisper a promise of the Bible while giving Dan his medicine, to perceive no responsive look in the poor lad's face, but instead, a gaze of wistful, anxious questioning, as of one who had called for help, and was listening and listening, and could hear no answer.

Maurice could say no more then; but in the quiet intervals of that long listless night, when he did not venture to move a finger, in the hope the patient might be sleeping, his thoughts went sadly back to the little garret in the alley where he had first seen Dan, so suffering and destitute, yet so happy in his unquestioning child's faith in the Presence of God with him all day (though hidden "like the stars in the light"), and in the love of God which was better than "mothers," and in Jesus who took the children in His arms.

What dreary change had come over the lad that that Name brought no light into his face now?

Had he failed in his care over this lamb of the Great Shepherd's flock? While caring for Dan's earthly wants, and providing him with the means of maintaining himself, had he left him alone to struggle with the terrible tempter in the wilderness, "an hungered" among the wild beasts?

Maurice recalled many a time when he had sought to keep open by friendly conversation the confidence Dan had once given him. He remembered also that he had observed lately how this confidence seemed to have grown more reserved. But until now this had not troubled him. He had thought it was merely the natural change from childhood to youth, when the intenser personal consciousness of dawning manhood gathers the soul into itself, and makes it silent, with the silence of those "nights" of life, which are as essential as the "days" to the growth of the good seed. He had a horror of forced confidences, or rather a conviction of their impossibility. Such violent pumpings out of experience, Maurice thought, commonly only succeeded in extracting what has previously been pumped in. The deep springs of the heart remain unstirred. True confidence, he believed, is scarcely more at the control of the giver than of the receiver. It flows when the subterranean reservoirs are full, and not else. Yet Maurice knew that there are moments when the heart is bursting to speak, and yet unable *of itself* to break the barrier of timidity, until the floods are set free by some

destructive convulsion, to desolate and destroy, which the slightest touch of love might have unsealed, to fertilize and freshen. Had he watched as he ought for such moments with Dan? Had he waited as he ought on the Hand in which the hearts of men are held always as the rivers of water?

Very easy questions to answer or to evade in the ordinary course of life; but very apt to recur, and to be found very hard to answer, and quite impossible to evade, by sick or dying beds, when the heart which we might have reached is sealed to us, and the voice which might have spoken to us is silent, or startles us with the abrupt questionings of delirium. Maurice found no answer but a very humble expression of short-comings to God, and a very earnest prayer that the feeble breath of life beside him might not fail.

So many days passed on, and Maurice spent all the time of the day or night that he could spare in watching by Dan's sick-bed.

Thus it happened that while Winnie was thinking of him as a hero, and seriously considering whether she might not include him in the "noble army of martyrs" when she sang the Te Deum, and Fan was thinking of him as an angel of grace, Maurice was feeling himself a very neglectful and unprofitable servant, whose only hope it was that God in His great mercy would give him another opportunity of doing the duty he had failed to do. A state of feeling more common, perhaps, among the holy Church throughout the world, and even with the noble army of martyrs, than some writers

of religious biography and *oraisons funèbres* would lead us to imagine.

But at length the day came when the prayers of the little sister in the garret looking on the sky, and the little sister in the room in the pleasant home looking over lawn, and wood, and distant hills, those prayers which had for so many days been meeting on their way to heaven, were changed into thanksgivings.

Little Fan came to another depth too deep for words as she sobbed out her thanks to God that brother Dan was mending; and Winnie quite entered into the old Hebrew expressions about the heart leaping and dancing for joy, as she rose one morning and thought of Maurice's promise to come and see them on the next day but one, which was Monday, when all fear of carrying infection, he said, would be over.

But Maurice's own thanksgivings were deeper still, for on the morning before, Dan had been removed, at Mrs. Anderson's request, to a room in her house, where she could look in on him, and see to all he wanted, and on that very morning the long pent-up tide of perplexities and doubts had found its way from poor Dan's heart into his.

The very utterance had greatly relieved the poor lad. There are many goblins which only need to be tempted to the threshold of the heart to melt at once into nothingness by the mere force of daylight. There are many perplexities which are answered in the mere utterance of them.

Yet Dan's fight had been a very real one. It is

the necessary solitariness of all true spiritual struggles that constitutes more than half the struggle. These battles have to be fought in the darkness. The enemy chooses his field and his hour. We cannot see the forces we are fighting with. And if the shield of faith falls from the grasp—faith in Him who *can* see, who had His hour of darkness, and is evermore the Light for all, we are helpless indeed.

"Oh, Mr. Bertram," Dan said at length, on the morning after his reaching the quiet room at Mrs. Anderson's, when Maurice had been reading him one of the Gospel narratives of the crucifixion, "you believe it is all true! It is not only that you are a parson, and that you *wish* it was true; you believe it is true in your very heart; don't you? As true as that you see me?"

"I do," said Maurice, recalling his own hours of doubt and darkness. "I have never doubted *this* history, only *my own*."

"*You* have had doubts too, then?" said Dan eagerly. But then he added with a languid hopelessness, "But not like mine, not like mine!"

"No two people's doubts and temptations are alike, Dan," said Maurice; "the tempter has too many wiles to employ the same twice."

"Yes, the tempter!" sighed Dan; "Mrs. Anderson said it was the tempter. Oh, I wish I could be sure it was!"

"Did you say anything to Mrs. Anderson, then?" asked Maurice.

"Only last night, when she had smoothed my

pillow like a mother, and kissed my forehead, and read me a Psalm, and I was so miserable, and felt such an impostor, I could not help saying, 'O, if I only could believe!' and she said, 'Believe that you have an interest in Christ?' And I said, 'Oh, if I could believe that *there is Christ!*' But she looked so grieved-like, and told me to beware of the tempter, and never let such thoughts in, and above all, never speak them out, so that I could not say another word. But she said she'd pray for me."

"And she will," said Maurice, "which is better than many arguments. Did you ever tell any one else of your difficulties, Dan?"

"Once I was beginning with a missionary kind of a gentleman, but he spoke so learned, and said such terrible things about conceit and presumption, that I was shut up altogether, and never dared to breathe a word of what I felt to any one."

"You never spoke even to me, Dan."

"Once, Mr. Bertram, I was very near it. If you had stayed five minutes longer I must. You spoke to me about the day you came to me in the garret at aunt's and said you hoped I had the same happy faith as then."

"That five minutes might have saved you much misery, my poor fellow," said Maurice; "I must have neglected you sadly, I am afraid. But perhaps the Good Shepherd was leading you by better ways, hard as they might be. *What* did you doubt then, Dan?"

"*Everything*, Mr. Bertram," said Dan, "everything I cannot see or touch, and sometimes that too.

Sometimes it seems as if we were nothing but a better-made kind of beasts; and sometimes it seems as if I was nothing but a dream myself, and all that happens to me."

Then came out the history. On the unreasoning, unquestioning faith of childhood had broken in the rude Why and How of unbelief, not mistily rising from his own heart, but pressed rudely on him, in strong, tangible forms, by his mates in the workshop and at meal-times. While the religious world, high on dry land, was busy with its neat little debates, or its fiery little explosions, about "baptisms and laying on of hands," and the forms, and attitudes, and costumes in which to pray, and the precise efficacy of sacraments, and the precise settlement of prophetical dates, poor Dan, with the working men around him, was being tossed about by the rough breakers, and the rough and real rocks of utter shipwreck, battered between the old shoals and whirlpools of materialism and Pyrrhonism. The scepticism of his circle was on such world-old questions as whether there ever was a revelation; whether prayer is anything but a dream; whether the soul is immortal or, indeed, exists apart from the brain; whether anything exists beyond the material and visible; on the very personality and existence of God. He, with so many like him, had been tossing on the great sea of heathenism, which is always dashing round the farthest outposts of what can by any stretch of liberality be called the Church.

He had been asked why he believed the Bible true, and he had little reason to give except that it

had made him happy; and then the sneering doubt found its way in and the happiness vanished. He had been asked why he prayed, and he had little reason to give except that he felt God was hearing him. And then even on his knees the mocking words followed him, and he could not resist them, and he seemed speaking into a blank. So the temptation went on, until there was little left to him except the growth of pure feelings and moral principles which the Sun of Righteousness had ripened in his heart, and the anguish that the Sun had vanished.

"And as I lay on my bed," said Dan, "it felt like falling and falling through a great gulf without any bottom; and clutching, and grasping, and feeling all round me nothing but emptiness; and gazing, and gazing, and seeing nothing but the dark."

"You did not give up prayer and reading the Bible?" said Maurice.

"No; I said the words, because of poor mother asked me when she die; and I read the chapter because of poor little Fan. She thinks so much of me, Fan do, Mr. Bertram, and she told me how you and Miss Grace wished her and me to read the Bible every day, and it would have puzzled her so if I had told her I didn't. Besides, now and then they seemed to do me good, somehow, like the sound of mother's voice, or yours, or Fan's."

"Thank God for that," said Maurice, quietly.

"Oh, Mr. Bertram, how I wish I'd died when I was lying lame and sick in aunt's garret. I was so

happy then. Except for Fan," he added, "except for poor Fan. She's got no one but me."

"Why should you wish you had died then?" said Maurice, quietly. "If what you believed then is not true, what good is it to die? and if it *is* true, how well it is worth while to live!"

"Oh, but, Mr. Bertram, I should *know*," said Dan, "I should know."

"You *shall* know, Dan," said Maurice, gently. "If any man *will* do my will he shall know of the doctrine whether it is of God or whether I speak of myself."

And then, very calmly, leaving aside all minor questions of evidence, and all the great outer sea of scepticism, Maurice went straight to the heart of Christianity. He spoke of the Redeemer. He told Dan something of what the heathen world and the Jewish nation were when that divine life was lived; of the corruption of the Gentile, the narrow formalism and narrowing pride of the Jew. He made him see how that pure and perfect character rose from amidst all this hollowness and corruption, not detached from them as an image fallen from heaven, but springing from the same root, growing amidst it, sharing every influence of the age; a Jew whose patriotism no fanatical Jew dared to question, yet the friend of the Samaritan and the Canaanite; receiving sinners and eating with them, yet with a stainless purity no suborned false witness dared to assail. He showed the poor perplexed lad how the invention of such a life at such a time would have been scarcely less a miracle than the living it. He

pointed out to him detail after detail of those four marvelous pictures through which we gain a more intimate acquaintance with that sacred life through the mists of eighteen centuries than any biography gives us of the life of any good man who died in our times. The words He spoke, the *looks* with which He spoke them; the *turning to* the outcast woman while He pleaded for her with the Pharisee; the *touching* the leper who might approach no one, while the nobleman's son was healed across the Galilean hills by a word; the holy anger with which He looked at the cruel formalists who grudged the healing of the sufferer on the Sabbath—yet anger which in all its holy fire was akin not to vengeance but to sorrow, "being *grieved* at the hardness of their hearts;" the tenderness and truth which made the severity against all that was *against* love and truth so piercing. Maurice spoke of all this until his own heart glowed with the utterance, and the wandering, aimless, hopeless look in poor Dan's face was slowly changed into the penetrating gaze of eager interest. And then at last he spoke of that last night and day; the day which closed at the ninth hour, and closed over the dead Redeemer, and the redeemed world. He showed Dan how terribly spontaneous and real were all the actions of all the human actors and sufferers in that last crisis, how Judas "watched to betray him;" how Pilate all but took courage to rescue him; how Peter was warned step by step of his danger, as from warming himself at the fire among his master's enemies, he came to denying

him with a vehemence which reached the Sufferer's heart through all the blindfolding and buffeting; and how all the tide of love came rushing back on his heart with that "look." And yet he made him see behind these human agents dreadful glimpses of the invisible tempter who was "watching to betray" Judas, who was seducing Pilate, who was sifting Peter. He made him see how every step of that long "way of sorrow" by which the victim was dragged bound and bleeding to the cross, was yet a *voluntary* step of the willing sacrifice, whose eyes, still haggard with the agony of Gethsemane, could make the band of officers fall to the ground; whose lightest tone as he stood a bound captive could have brought down legions of angels; whose intercession, as they nailed his hands to the cross, was the prayer of the High Priests, saving to the uttermost; whose promise on lips parched with the thirst of death was paradise.

Gradually, as Maurice spoke, the look in Dan's face changed still further, from perplexity to steady attention, from attention to the faint dawning of hope, from hope to adoration, until, as Maurice, after a short silence, knelt beside the bed and offered a few words of prayer, one long sob of relief burst from Dan's heart, like the sob of returning life in a drowning man, and when Maurice rose he clasped his hand for some moments with a speechless look of gratitude, until at length he murmured:

"It is *gone!*—the darkness is gone. Jesus Christ is true—Jesus Christ is living. The darkness is

gone, Mr. Bertram—all gone; it is all right, for I can see Him."

That was the recovery which filled Maurice with such unutterable thankfulness, deeper even than Winnie's for his own preservation from infection, or little Fan's for Dan's recovery from the borders of death.

Many conversations followed, as Dan could bear them. All lesser doubts melted away on the unsealing of that living fountain of love and truth, as a spring sweeps away its own icicles. The moral and spiritual world grew real at once, and took form and substance around that perfection of moral and spiritual beauty manifested in God manifest in the flesh. Eternal life was the necessary atmosphere around the Living Lord; immortality was His natural clothing, and ours through Him; that must, indeed, be a Divine revelation which had revealed Him. His miracles, Dan thought, must have been as natural to Him as speech and movement to us. Life and healing *must* have flowed from his touch; the waves and winds *must* have known His voice of command, and recognised His step, just as the sellers of doves did in the temple. His wondrous works were so *like Him*, Dan thought—like His gracious words of authority, like His tones of command and pity, like Himself. And as to that mighty and merciful Saviour pitying and forgiving him, himself, poor, weak, doubting, perplexed, bad as he felt himself to have been, Dan had no more doubt of it than if he had heard him say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." Had he not stretched out His hand to Peter, and sent a message to him *by name*, by an angel,

that he might not think for an hour longer than could be helped, he was forgotten or unforgiven—even after he had denied with oaths? To believe that "He is" and not to believe that He is love; to believe that He has died to redeem and not to believe that He will forgive those who ask Him; to believe and adore Him and think that He will not love and pity and help us; to believe that the Saviour lives and is *not* ready to save—were perplexities that did not enter Dan's mind. After the furnace he had passed through, these fiery darts fell feebly around him, like spent sparks. In finding the Christ he found all—immortality, life, forgiveness, strength, rest.

The next day was Sunday. A very joyous Sunday morning it was to Dan, as he sat propped up at the window in the little back-room at Mrs. Anderson's, too weak yet to walk, and listened to the plashing of the water from the pipe into the back court, and to the twittering of the sparrows on a poor maimed tree in the next back court, and wondered if they were like the sound of the streams and the twittering of the sparrows in Judea and Galilee. And a very joyous Sunday morning also to Fan in her garret, dressing quickly to light the kitchen fire, but not too quickly to have time to kneel and look up through the garret window to the sky, and feel how sweet it was to say, "Our Father who art in heaven, *thy will be done*," now that Dan was getting well again; and to Winnie rejoicing in

the thought of the morrow which was to bring Maurice; and to Maurice, giving thanks for Dan, and feeling what a glorious thing it was to have to speak of that living Word, that dying Lord, to hundreds of toiling and tried human beings that very day; and to Grace rejoicing in the happiness of Fan, and Dan, and Winnie, and Maurice, and in her own private share of all this joy besides.

Winnie was, moreover, in a great state of exultation not only on account of her hopes for the morrow, but in virtue of a plan she had for that day. This plan was no other than that Mrs. O'Brien should go with her that very Sunday evening to hear Maurice in his own church.

Most diplomatically she arranged in her own mind how she would introduce the subject, how she would interest her aunt in it, and how unanswerably she would meet the objections of her uncle. But, as usual when the umbrella is provided, the rain never came. All these imaginary objections were never made, and these irresistible arguments were never needed. Mrs. O'Brien caught quite eagerly at Winnie's proposition, and Mr. O'Brien, having concluded that a fly would be a more appropriate mode of conveyance to such a neighborhood than the carriage, had not a difficulty to throw in the way.

Winnie little knew the thoughts that were tumultuously surging through Mrs. O'Brien's heart as they drove through the streets. Her own heart was entirely full of one thought—the joy of seeing and hearing Maurice.

The streets through which they drove had a Sabbath stillness, but little of a Sunday joyousness about them. The great current of business was for the day arrested. They passed rapidly without obstruction through the silent thoroughfares, where on any other day they would have had to creep slowly step by step amidst a deafening din of drays, gigantic wagons, and heavily-laden omnibuses. The side pavements were deserted by the great stream of commercial activity with which they usually overflowed, and instead were besprinkled with a few drops of the human life still left in the city, bubbling up from side streets and blind alleys and cellars. Poor pallid specimens of human life they were, for the most part, in Winnie's eyes, neutral-tinted with the coloring of pawnshops, poor people who had not strength or means to fly for the day's holiday to the suburbs; pale mothers, and ragged elder sisters bringing out the babies for a breath of fresh air, in the wide empty streets; men loitering about in their working clothes from one gin palace to another. And here and there a company of orderly people united in a common stream by the bond of some common place of worship to which they were hastening. Winnie looked with inquiring interest on the pallid wanderers, and on the churchgoers. She wondered if among the former there might not be some Dan and Fan; and to the latter she wished to be able to say, "We are not loiterers; we are going to church to hear Maurice, my own brother Maurice!"

Mrs. O'Brien saw and heard little. The outside

of the ragged, dejected-looking creatures was too familiar to her; and their hearts she began almost to despair of reaching, at least of reaching with anything that could raise and help. Yet through all her regrets and recollections some words Maurice had spoken at Combe floated like the fragment of a melody, and she had a kind of vague hope that that evening she might hear the rest. She remembered his once saying to her and Lady Katharine, in the drawing-room at the Abbey, "There is, I believe, but one Mediator between man and man, as well as between God and man."

A bare prosaic church Winifred thought St. Alphege, in the few moments she had to observe anything before the service began. A church built after the great fire had burned the living old Gothic churches out of the city, and a cold classicism had frozen the living spring of Gothic architecture in the imagination of artists and people. The last summer evening sunbeams slanted in long dusty lines on the large old pulpit and on the side of the reading-desk, which was concealed from her by a pillar, until Maurice's voice broke on the little sister's ear, and then, for a few minutes, not only galleries, high pews, and dusty sunbeams, but the meaning of the sacred words themselves, were entirely lost to her in the great joy of hearing his voice once more, deep and clear and natural, filling the church as easily as if he were only speaking "parables" to her at home. Only for a few minutes. Very soon Winnie felt that Maurice was praying, and her heart went penitently up in the

old petition so continually needed, "We have gone astray like lost sheep, we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and left undone those things which we ought to have done, and there is no health in us."

Then came the sermon. And for the first time Winnie saw her brother's face again. By this time the pulpit lamps were lighted, and Winnie's heart almost stopped beating as she saw how very pale and worn he looked, so that she carried away only two definite thoughts from the sermon; the first that Maurice was very ill; and the second that the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom he was speaking, was infinitely kind and good, and very near. Between which thoughts she silently cried all the time, letting the tears fall as they trickled down for fear her aunt should see her and try to comfort her.

But Mrs. O'Brien drank every word of that sermon into her inmost heart. And to her the sermon seemed to be this. For to every true hearer's heart a true sermon is preached over again, and in none quite in the same way. The thought glanced at in one is brought out in strong relief to another as if it were the only one, because it is the message needed. To the minds of false hearers on the lofty platform of self-complacent criticism the true sermon is probably not preached at all, but quite another, composed of such echoes of the ends and beginnings of sentences as reach their heights, pieced out with comments of their own.

But Mrs. O'Brien was on no critical judgment-seat. She sat in the low place of the little chil-

dren, and to her Maurice's sermon seemed to be this:

"'While He yet talked to the people, behold, His mother and His brethren stood without, desiring to speak with Him.

"'Then one said unto Him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.

"'But He answered and said unto him that told Him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?

"'And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!

"'For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.'

"Did these words never strike any of you as wanting in that human tenderness, which we know characterized our Lord? If it has been so with any of you, do not try to explain this feeling away, or to gloss it over with some faint misty compromise between the text in the Bible and text of the old characters of pure human affection, equally divine, although broken and defaced, written in your hearts. Bring both to the light; examine every letter. They never disagree, when you read the whole of both. They were written by the same hand. But never try to make them agree by leaving out part of either, still less by altering one iota of either. That is the way half the heresies have arisen, and all of them have been nourished. Let us bring out, as far as we can, the apparent contradiction, and examine it.

"For thirty years the perfect manhood of our Lord has been shining as the light of one humble home at Nazareth, all that perfection of truth and love, trust and trustworthiness, had been known to Mary, as the Son 'subject' to her; and now He sat surrounded by a crowd of strangers, carping scribes from Jerusalem, ignorant wondering peasants, and fishermen from the towns around the lake of Galilee, and *she* stood without, outside the inner circle, 'desiring to speak with Him,' needing some stranger's voice to 'entreat' that she might speak to Him, and for answer receiving nothing but the declaration—not addressed to the mother, but to the disciples—placing her, it might seem, on a level with those who had only begun to know Him yesterday! Was there nothing in this to pierce through her heart, faithful and gentle as it was?

"But was there nothing in the history of those thirty years to explain this to her who 'kept' so fondly all things concerning Him, and pondered them in the silence of her lowly heart? Was there no bursting on her memory of the face of One little more than a child, yet deep with a superhuman depth, in the midst of the doctors in the Temple? No echo of a 'Wist ye not?' tender yet most solemn? No memory of a wedding-feast, where her prayer had indeed been granted, but as the prayer of a child, not the command of a mother? Was there nothing in her own purpose that ought to explain this answer to her? St. Mark, so often supplying some characteristic detail, can explain

this to us. Our Lord had just solemnly ordained the twelve, laying the foundation of the Church; and the multitudes had gathered together around Him, the first stones of the building which was to be the new temple of God; and when His friends (or kinsmen) heard of it, they went out to lay hold on Him, for they said, 'He is beside himself.' It was to this purpose Mary for a moment seemed to be lending herself, the love of the mother for a brief space contending with the love of the redeemed creature. *Three times* only do we hear of her heart rising in momentary misunderstanding and opposition to His. Once in Jerusalem, after the three days seeking Him sorrowing, 'Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us?' Once at Cana, in a subtler form, pressing Him on with a fond eagerness to His glory before the time; and now again the poor fond heart trembles and struggles as the home of Nazareth crumbles away, that He who had been its Support and Joy may become the foundation of the Church of God. And after that *never again!*

"When He went up sore amazed and very heavy to Jerusalem to die, when He came unto the garden where He knew the traitor would find Him, no fond mother's voice sought with agonized pleadings to keep Him back. And yet she was not far off. At the Cross she stood by Him, speechless and submissive, while the sword pierced her heart. At the Cross once more His eyes noted her; amidst the agony of death, amidst the joy of the world's redemption, tender and pitiful came back the voice she had known at Nazareth, 'Woman, behold thy

son! behold thy mother!' And *now*, as she, lowly and blessed, stands among the innermost circle of the disciples, do not the words which once may have pierced as a reproof, fall for evermore a benediction, as looking round on His disciples, He says, 'Behold my mother and my brethren?'

"But the lesson Mary learned then can scarcely be learned without anguish. What was this lesson? *God first.* Not God *only*, as some mystical writers say, not the Creator to the *exclusion* of the creature. But God *first.* Mary was our Lord's one human relationship. He had no other. All earthly tenderness was for Him concentrated in the love of a son for the mother. And that this love was real, she can testify, in whose house He lived subject for thirty years, who followed Him to the Cross. His own death agony made no break in His tender care for her. But did she seek to come for an instant between Him and God? 'Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?' 'What have I to do with thee?' Turning from her to the disciples, 'Behold my mother and my brethren.' Take the words in their full strength. If you attempt to soften away the lofty determination of the choice between the earthly and the heavenly, between the mother and God, you lower at the same time the tenderness of the human love into mere softness.

"Consecration, Christians, before service. Obedience to God, *if necessary*, *against* obedience to man.

"But to this incident, as in most others in our

Lord's life there are two aspects. 'Perfect man and perfect God.' He manifests in all He is, and says, and does, not by effort, not as one *acting* to be an example, but naturally, necessarily, essentially, what man should be, shall be.

"And also He manifests, not by an effort as an ambassador representing a sovereign, but naturally, necessarily, essentially, what God is.

"If to Mary those words were the closing of earthly love and its fond ties, to us they are the unclosing of the heavenly life and its relationships, or rather the revealing of the Church which is the *heavenly family.* They reveal to us the individuality of the love of Christ. They reveal Him to us as the Divine Head of redeemed man, the second man who is the Lord from heaven. They give us the key at once to the heart of Christ and to the hearts of men. They unite us to our fellow men in uniting us to Him.

"St. Mark and St. Matthew more especially show us this individuality of the love of Christ to each disciple. They add the words, 'For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my mother, and sister, and brother.' Not mother and brethren only, but mother, sister, and brother. No mere plural *brethren*, no vague collective, substantive 'brotherhood,' but mother, and sister, and brother. Not '*I*' and '*you*' merely, still less I and *they*, but I and *thou*, and thou, and thou. 'My mother, my sister, my brother;' so close, so personal, so tender is the relationship between our Lord and the disciples. Between our Lord and whom? Looking

round about on those that sat about Him, He loved the multitude around Him, He had taken on Him the nature common to all. The *look* of pitying, welcoming love was on all. But the *words* must have pierced into some hearts there as a sword, before they flowed into the wound as the balm. 'Whosever shall do the will of God. Whosoever shall hear the word of God and do it.' The truth must divide before it can unite. It must wound before it can heal. Many thronged Him. But one touched Him. He felt the touch. She felt the cure. So must it be with you. Any gospel which speaks of Christ as the Physician of all without pointing out the necessity of each coming to Him for the cure, may flow *around* the heart like music. It will never penetrate into the heart, like balm, and heal its wounds. We have need of St. Paul's and Luther's *my* as well as of St. John's 'the whole world.' 'My mother, my sister, my brother,' follows on 'my Saviour, my Lord, and my God.' Say so to Him, beloved, look up to Him, meet His look as He looks round about on you all, and say, 'My Lord!' Since that day in the house at Capernaum, He has been in agony in Gethsemane, He has been crucified on Calvary, He has been obedient to the death of the Cross for us, He has finished the work the Father gave Him to do for us, He has drunk to the dregs the cup the Father gave Him to drink for us, He has loved us unto death. The eyes which look round about on us now have looked up from the Cross as He said, 'Father, forgive them;' have looked down from the Cross as He said, 'To-day

thou shalt be with me in Paradise;' have been sealed in death; have welcomed thousands of thousands of His redeemed to the Father's house. Look up, acknowledge it, and thank Him. Or, if you can *not* look up, fall at His feet and hide your face there, and say, 'My Lord and my God,' and He will say to you, 'Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my sister, my mother, my brother. *This* is the will of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.'

"Yes, 'my' as strictly, truly, really, personally, 'my,' and as if, with Mary, you had dwelt with him thirty years at Nazareth.

"Take this 'my' to your heart, ask the Spirit of God to engrave it there. It will make the poorest heart rich, and will supply every earthly relationship withheld from you. It will compensate for every earthly relationship withdrawn from you.

"In two ways. Firstly and primarily, by the personal love of Christ to you, felt delighted in, returned, actually, truly, simply, without exaggeration the deepest joy, and the deepest feeling the heart of man or woman can know. It will absolutely satisfy your heart. It would satisfy your heart if it were his will you should spend the rest of your life alone in a dungeon.

"But secondly and secondarily, since you are not alone in a dungeon, but in families, in parishes, in congregations, in a country, it will fill your hearts by rebinding the broken links of human love which were snapped when Adam fell, and excused his distrust of God by a selfish accusation of her God had

given to be with him. In Christ, the second Adam, we have a new relationship to all human beings. In Christ, the Head of the Church, we have a new and immortal relationship to all Christians. 'In that ye did it to the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me.' Link these words to the other; let the life of faith overflow into the life of service, and never more shall you complain of isolation or loneliness, of none to love you, or of none for you to serve. See in every suffering, tried, sinful man and woman around you, those whom your Lord pitied, loved, died for; those who may be led from what ever depth, who may be led by *your* voice and your hand, to be blessed as you are in Him. Go forth every morning not *from* his presence, but *in* His presence, strong in the faith of His personal love to you, and you shall find the hardest yoke easy, and the heaviest burden light; for the burdens of circumstance and earthly trial are light indeed to those whose hearts are set free from the burden of guilt, from the weight of an aimless life, from the weight of an empty heart, crushed by its own vacuum.

"And let us notice that in all this specifying of the relationships which the Lord sustains to the individual disciple, there is one omission. Unnoticed and unknown Christian, serving perhaps in some strange household with your kindred far away! He says to you, 'My sister!' Poor broken-hearted outcast, cast out by yourself from home, not having heard the tones of pure affection for years—He is ready to call you 'my sister!' Aged and lonely, from whom all who knew you in child-

hood and youth have died away, whom no one lives to call by the tender old home name—*He* calls you 'my sister.' Bereaved and childless, from whom the tender clinging of infant arms has been withdrawn—He promises to supply that void to you. He draws you tenderly to himself, 'My sister, my *mother*.' He sends you forth to the motherless—to the helpless, childless hands that have no mother's bosom round which to cling.

"But one name he calls you not. So carefully, so jealously does the Bible keep guard over the barrier which divides tenderness from sentimentalism, mystery from mysticism.

"He calls no one of you 'My bride.'

"The bride of Christ is One.

"Not to the Church does our Lord say 'My mother, my sister.'

"Not to the individual Christian does he say, 'My spouse.'

"The day is coming when the whole multitude of the redeemed, cleansed in one fountain, tried in many fires, shall rise as one spotless, consecrated company, to share forever the keeping of the new Paradise, the Bride of the Lamb, the Eve of the second Adam. That company is being gathered, tried, purified now.

"But to the inmost heart of each one in it that Divine and human voice is ever saying, 'My mother, my sister, my brother.' 'In that ye did it to the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.'"

Maurice's calm, deep voice ceased.

But the voice that had been speaking in Mrs. O'Brien's heart ceased not. She had found the lacking link with God and with man. She had found the living Fountain from which her own heart and all beside can be watered. Winnie felt a new indescribable tenderness in her manner that evening as she came to see her after she was in bed, and comfort her about Maurice's pale face.

"We will ask God to take care of Maurice," she said, softly. No more, yet in such a tone, so calm and reverent, they seemed like new words to Winnie.

To Mrs. O'Brien it was as if an adamant wall had melted away between her and God, and between her and every heart around her. The crystal barrier which had isolated her, had indeed been not rock but ice; no new truth was this which had set Mrs. O'Brien's heart free. But there is such a thing in this nineteenth century as well as in the first, as the Holy Spirit opening the heart to Divine truth, and making the truth the living seed of the new creation.

There is such a thing in these days as coming to Christ, as personally as those did who touched the hem of his garment, or bathed his feet with tears; not *thinking about* him merely, but *coming to* him · not coming to him for forgiveness and deliverance from death only, but for strength to suffer, to labor, to conquer, to serve, coming to him and having *life.*

Just when Dan was recovering, one of those low

fevers which are hovering perpetually like birds of prey over the low neighborhoods of large cities, made a swoop on Maurice's parish and carried off some of the many in such districts always standing on that lowest level of life, which is on the verge of death. Maurice was constantly occupied among the sick and dying, and his health, already tried by the watching and anxiety, was not proof against the sorrowful scenes he had to witness and the infected atmosphere he had to breathe.

One morning Mrs. O'Brien was made anxious by a brief note, began in his handwriting, speaking of a slight feverish cold, but supplemented with some words in a round laborious hand, commencing, Honored Madam, and informing Mrs. O'Brien that master was very low, and had been a little "out" in the night; but that the doctor thought he would get him through, and the "*other doctor*" said he would know better in the evening; and that she, the writer, would have sent to Mrs. O'Brien before, but they had not been able to leave master alone, and that he must be kept quiet; and the doctor did not think the fever was catching, but he could not be sure; and they were using chloride of lime and taking every care, and the doctor was going to send another nurse.

All which, with an entire absence of dates and medical definitions, left nothing clear on Mrs. O'Brien's mind but that she must go instantly and see what was the matter, and what could be done.

She was perplexed what to do about Winnie,

but as she looked up at her from the open letter, something in the child's face made her feel that the greatest cruelty would be to keep her in suspense.

"It is from Maurice," she said.

Winnie nodded; she had known it, and had been watching her aunt's changing face all the time she was reading. But she could not speak.

"My darling," said Mrs. O'Brien, drawing her closer to her, "Maurice is ill."

"Yes, auntie," in a steady voice. "And we are going to him."

"I am, Winnie—at once—and I will come back and tell you directly."

No reply. Her lips were quivering.

"If you and Maurice were my own children, Winnie, I would take you. But I must not, for your mother's sake."

A look of agonized imploring from Winnie's eyes, but not a word. Partly because the words seemed strangled, and partly because she did very earnestly want to do what Maurice would think right.

"I must not, darling. Do you understand? Maurice and I talked about it once," she said, "and he begged me not."

"Maurice did?" said Winnie, with one sob. And then, "Oh auntie, I cannot make it out, but I will try to bear it."

"And now, Winnie, the sooner I am gone, the sooner I shall be back."

"And Maurice will be glad to see you, auntie."

The tears were kept back. The bell was rung

for the carriage, but Winnie found comfort in running out to the stable and telling the coachman. No one, she was sure, could do it so quickly. And then she came back and handed Mrs. O'Brien her things, and stood with her at the door waiting for the carriage, without a tear or another entreaty. Only just as the wheels were heard, her face flushed crimson, and she whispered:

"Not if Maurice would not wish it, auntie, but if I *might* drive in with you and wait outside! I should see his window, and I should know an hour sooner, and I should not come near any danger. Only not if Maurice and you would think it wrong."

Mrs. O'Brien hesitated an instant, and then consented, and almost before she was in the carriage, Winnie was beside her, Rosalie for once making no attempt to delay her toilette.

What an age the few minutes at the door of Maurice's parsonage seemed to the child as she sat in the carriage outside. How far off all the people seemed, passing by and gazing at her. In another world, Winnie thought. It was Winnie's first experience of the variableness of our measures of time and space.

But at length Mrs. O'Brien reappeared. And with the quiet even voice which naturally comes by sick beds, she said:

"There is no danger." And then she went on to say something about weakness and slow recovery. But Winnie heard nothing else. She sat quite quiet until Mrs. O'Brien went into the house again, and

then she sank down on the floor of the carriage and buried her face on the seat, and wept out one of those prayers of agony whose repetitions are not "vain." "No danger—oh, our Saviour, our dear heavenly Father, I do thank thee; I am so glad; I do thank thee. No danger—no danger. Oh, do help me to be good, and to trust thee all my life!"

It was happy for Winifred that her anxiety had been so great as to make her accept any lesser degree of it as a blessing. For it was long before she was allowed to see Maurice again. The disease was but slowly prevailed with to relax its hold on him, and then it left him so enfeebled that he was ordered to winter in the East, commencing his absence with a voyage by the Bay of Biscay to Alexandria.

Very delicious it was at first when she could be with him again, to be allowed to sit quiet by Maurice, and watch what he wanted and bring it to him, although she resented the reiterated exhortations not to talk to him or to let him talk to her too much. "As if it were possible," she thought, "to descend to talking, from that rapture of sitting still and looking at him, or as if she wanted him to do anything but sit still and let him look at her." Nevertheless, as the days wore on, and accumulated endless material for conversation, endless questions for Maurice to answer, endless things to explain to him. She began again to despond. Accustomed as her imagination was to leap all intervals, and taking the miraculous healings in the Gospels as her chief experience of disease and cure, she began

to be plunged again in the depths of despair. So that when at last Maurice announced to her that he was sentenced to absolute rest for at least six months, and to winter in Egypt, she felt persuaded she had been buoyed up with false hopes, a conviction which was confirmed by Rosalie's ominous waving of her hands when the news was communicated to her.

"These unfortunate islanders," she murmured, "they fly everywhere from the fatal weight of their sombre atmosphere. But, ah, who can fly from destiny? Ah, well, we will have a mass said for him. Who knows but he may be saved after all. The good God is merciful."

"Pray that Maurice may be saved from what, Rosalie? Pray that he may only become a Roman Catholic? Oh, please not to ask that."

"Ah, mademoiselle, perhaps it was wrong; but I was thinking not of M. Maurice's soul so much as of his life, little one, and of you."

"But, Rosalie," rejoined Winnie, with tears in her eyes, "the gentleman, the priest you will ask to pray for Maurice will not care about it nearly as much as you do. And God cares for the prayers of the people who care. Will *you* ask?"

"Do I not, mademoiselle, every evening? Do I not recommend M. Maurice to the protection of our Lord? Have I not said hundreds of aves and paters for him, more than I did for my little brother Jeannot?"

"But Jeannot did not recover, Rosalie!" said Winnie, despondingly.

"There is wood grown for every one's coffin, poor little one," said Rosalie, whose practical religion (like that of multitudes in all parts of Christendom, whether nominally Roman Catholic or Protestant), was derived from a source more ancient than the Christian era, and amounted to a vague belief in a perpetual struggle between destiny and certain friendly heavenly powers, in which prayers and religious rites may possibly make the scale for a time incline to the side of the suppliant.

But when one evening before he left, Maurice's hopeful encouraging words penetrated the tearful mist of Winnie's forebodings, and she confided to him, in a burst of long-repressed grief, her fears and Rosalie's, he said:

"Winnie, poor little sister, you have indeed been taking a long journey, quite down into the sunless land among the old pagan shades. And a dreary company of ghosts you have brought back with you. Prayers which cannot stop the growth of coffins! And vague presentiments and stony fates! Where have you been? Wake up, Winnie," he said, "and look up. It is daylight. This world is no bounded theatre with a low arched roof of stars and blue, and the destinies of men balancing in scales you cannot touch, held in a hand you cannot see, itself controlled by a power without heart or life, irresistibly moving all things, and outside all. It is the free, boundless open air, where all creatures that are not doing wrong move freely. The irresistible power is not Fate but Love—not love only as a vague essence, but God-loving—loving you and

me, little sister, and hearing *you* and helping *me* every time you pray for me, whether I am sitting close to you, or watching beside Dan's bed, or steaming away on the Mediterranean."

And for the time the old pagan ghosts were laid in Winifred's heart. And she parted with Maurice more full of hope than of fear.

Meantime Grace Leigh had been going through her own trials. For the time her path and Winifred's had separated.

During Dan's illness, and then during Maurice's, the weeks and months had worn on as time does wear on in sickness—day crumbling away slowly after day, until, like the soft land on a coast on which the sea is slowly encroaching—no convulsions, no noise, nor incident to arrest attention. The passing observer sees only a few grains of earth gently mouldering down to the sands, like the sands of an hour-glass. But the aged inhabitant tells of fields and farms swept away.

So the year wore away and the friends saw little of each other, and Christmas came round again.

Grace was seeing other things besides time crumble away from her. She was sitting, one evening early in January, in her own room, with the red morocco Bible open before her at the page with her mother's writing in it. Her eyes were cast down, but she was not reading, and slowly, under the almost closed lids, tears were falling—slow, heavy drops, not like the showers which clear the air, but like the heat-drops on a sultry day.

It was the evening of the annual visit to Mr. Hunter's. But it was not that which was depressing Grace. The oppressive weight of Cousin Felix's patronage had been greatly lightened by little Maud's welcome. She managed to find some quiet minutes to tell Mr. Leigh how much happier she had been since her talk with him; but without words the quiet look of the little thin face and the unclouded smile with which she welcomed him would have told of the rest which had come into her heart.

"You look better, Maud," said Mr. Leigh, bending over the chair.

"Yes; I found it all in the Bible," said Maud, coloring, "all that you said."

"What did you find, Maud?"

"About God's better things," said Maud, softly, "and about our not having to be like other people, but just the best we can be, and about the Lord saying to us, not 'Get on,' but 'Follow Me.' I have tried it, Mr. Leigh, and it is so true. And I have worked it for you in gold thread. Please don't show it any one," she added, giving him a parcel, "for it is not illuminated but only worked, and Alicia and Adela say it is only fit for Sunday-school children. But I thought you would accept it, and I am so very much obliged to you. No one ever helped me as you did."

Which conversation Mr. Leigh related on their return to Grace with a faltering voice, as he unfolded the wrapping of silver paper and discovered a Bible-marker, on which were worked on perfor-

ated card-board, in black silk and gold, the words "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me."

And yet it was from little Maud's lips that the wound had come to Grace that day, which was costing her those bitter tears.

Grace had begun saying something to Maud (drawn on by her loving sympathy about her drawings) about Harry going to the University and becoming a clergyman.

But little Maud's face had clouded, and after a silence she had looked up, and said timidly:

"Are you sure Cousin Harry wishes it, Cousin Grace?"

Those words, gentle as they were, had pierced Grace's heart like a sting, as the simplest words so often will which compel us to face fears we have been struggling to repress, and she sat silent a few minutes, inwardly recalling what Maurice had said to her on the same subject.

"Has Harry been saying anything to you, Maud?" she said at length.

"No; I never asked. Only once when I was saying to him how nice it must be to be a clergyman like Mr. Leigh, he did not seem to think it nice. At least he looked grave, and began to talk about Hampstead Heath, and a strange kind of lizard he found there, and about getting the creatures for my Aquarium. So I thought Cousin Harry did not perhaps wish to be a clergyman," concluded Maud, "and asked him if he could get me some creatures one day from the Hampstead

Ponds for my Aquarium. And he seemed to like that much better. But perhaps it was only that Cousin Harry did not like to speak to me about it, or to any one but you, Cousin Grace," she added, seeing the shadow on Grace's brow, with the quick perception of one whose feelings generally expressed themselves more in looks than in words, and whose life had consisted so much in watching other people's lives.

But Maud's tender little apology could not do away with the effect of her previous question; and the next evening when Mr. Leigh happened to be out and the brother and sister were left alone Grace resolved bravely to face the question, which she now for the first time felt how determinedly she had evaded.

Harry was only too ready on his part for the confidence. She began with referring to his difficulties with Latin and Greek.

"It is not necessary, you know, Harry," she said "for you to know so very much of the classics. At least Mr. Bertram says not. And even if you only just passed, the University honors are not everything. And you might be useful in your parish in all kinds of practical ways afterwards."

"It is not the Latin and Greek," said Harry, availing himself desperately of the first opportunity Grace had given him, "or the University. It is the being a clergyman, Grace. Don't think me very wicked or ungrateful. I never can, I am sure; I never shall be fit for it. I have been longing to tell you for months and months. I've been

a great coward not to tell you before, but I could not bear to see you unhappy. But I'd rather stand behind Mr. Treherne's counter than stand up in a pulpit to preach."

"But you cannot stand behind Mr. Treherne's counter," said Grace, "and you would not have to stand in a pulpit and preach for years."

"But I should be getting nearer it every year," replied Harry, who had felt being silently and irresistibly attracted to that dreaded point by the silent power of Grace's gentle, persistent will, desperately bent on not losing this chance of escape.

Grace said nothing.

"You think me ungrateful and heartless! If it were only anything in the world to do or go through, Grace; but I can't talk about things. I *have* asked God to help me," he added, "but it's no good. It's no good, you know, Grace," he said in a reverent tone, "to ask even God to make an oyster into a nightingale. And that's just what I am. I mean an oyster. When I feel anything most it doesn't make me speak, it shuts me up; and I shall never be any better. So what's the good of my ever hoping to make sermons? If I care about things, I can't talk about them; and if I don't, of course there's nothing to talk about, unless you talk humbug, and I can't even do that," said Harry despondently, involuntarily proving his position by his very impotence to make his meaning clear.

To his infinite relief Grace looked up with one of her brightest smiles (she kept the tears for afterwards) and said:

"I don't think you ungrateful or wicked, Harry. I only think I have been very stupid and willful and blind."

Harry in an ecstacy of gratitude and relief and tenderness, was surprised into further confiding to his sister his ardent desire to be a medical man, and more especially, to be a naval surgeon. In this direction Harry soon became eloquent, and Grace endeavored to enter into it, though to the last she continued in doubt whether the chief element of Harry's choice was dread of sermon making, a later development of his childish passion for tittle-bats, the love of wandering and of maritime adventure, which is a phase in Anglo-Saxon boy-nature, or a genuine instinct towards the profession he was made for.

Of one thing, however, Grace felt more and more certain as she sat alone in her room, after this interview with her brother, and that was that the dream of life for Harry which had been interwoven with all her thoughts and had inspired half her work and sacrifices ever since she could remember, must be given up for ever.

Harry would never be the blessing of that ideal parish where he was to have been watched for by sick-beds and listened to so eagerly by an eager, simple-hearted congregation, while she was going quietly in and out, and supplementing his work among the mothers and the little ones, and hearing how he was beloved and watched for on sick and dying beds, while Mr. Leigh in a green old age, set free from the weight of constantly recurring preach-

ing which tried his nerves, might be the gentle counsellor and friend of all in need of sympathy and counsel, and the centre and consecration of that ideal humble little parsonage which Grace was to make such a resting-place for her father and brother.

A whole world of sweet visions had been shattered that evening. But more, perhaps, than over this desolation, she was grieving over the strength of her own rebellious will. With her sweet, bright temper, accustomed as she was to yield her own selfish wishes to others, and to make music, like a quiet brook, of the tiny obstacles which turned her out of her course, Grace had never until that evening learnt the strength of her own will. Like most sweet-tempered and gentle people, she had been much used to having her own way. The strength which peevish tempers waste in perpetual small contests had with her been gathered into the greater purposes of life. Unselfish alike in small plans and great, with a heart whose love all trusted, and a quiet good sense no one could help leaning on, she was little aware how much the lives of those around her had been moulded by her gentle, persistent will. And now she blamed herself far more than Harry for having so long misunderstood him. The "*Thy will be done*" that evening had especial need of the "*as it is in heaven*," to make her resolve to bend her own cherished life-purpose, which seemed to her so clear and good, to that larger scheme of which she saw so little.

And the next morning, when she came down, as

usual, to do an hour's painting before breakfast, the work did seem sadly flattened into prose, now that the money raised by it was to purchase, not the ambrosia of that ideal clerical life, but the daily bread wherewith to make Harry a naval surgeon.

Yet she knew that Mr. Bertram had been right in saying that the highest work for any one of us is that given us to do. And when her father met her revelation to him of Harry's confidence with awful, vague terrors as to the moral and theological perils to which medical students are exposed, tempted as she felt to seize this chance of escape back into her own way, she nevertheless honestly transferred herself to Harry's side, and succeeded in persuading Mr. Leigh to consult an old friend of his who was now an eminent physician; the result of which consultation was, that Harry was permitted to follow the career of his choice, the only stipulation which Mr. Leigh made being that he should do nothing decisive until Mr. Bertram returned, and Harry could have a confidential talk with him.

Winnie, to whom Grace confided her disappointment, and to whom Maurice's life and lot were the real and ideal of every vision, sympathized deeply with the fall of Harry's prospects. Personifying her visions from the characters known to her, it seemed to her a terrible fall indeed from a destiny like Maurice's to driving about in a brougham like Dr. Dee, and discussing coughs, and sore throats, and nerves.

"However," she said, "Grace," desperately catching at the only consolatory idea that suggested

itself, "St. Luke was a physician; and he found time to write the Gospel and the Acts between times. So perhaps Harry may do some good things by the way; perhaps he may even plan about them while he is driving in that brougham."

"I cannot bear that the work for God should be only *leisure*-work," said Grace. "I wanted all Harry's *business*-work to have been all of the highest kind."

"But," said Winnie, "there must be congregations, Grace; and don't you think the people who listen may be doing a little bit of God's work as well as the people who speak? Don't you think the people who look at the pictures may be of a little use as well as the people who paint them? I do hope they may, because it seems to me as if I were good for very little but being one of the people to look and listen."

"The lives of people must certainly be more than paintings or poems about them," said Grace, thoughtfully. "The living people must be more than the songs or the pictures."

"And then," said Winnie, "if Harry is a really clever doctor, and helps to make the people themselves stronger, and healthier, and less suffering, they may paint better, and sing better, and preach better, and live better, Grace; and that does seem something worth doing, particularly if God means him to do it," concluded Winnie, softly; "for I suppose God does mean some people to be doctors."

"I remember Mr. Bertram said once, to do God's work is simply to do His will," responded Grace.

And with this appeal to the keeper of her conscience, with Winnie at least the point was settled.

From her old friends, the Miss Lovels, Gracie did not find quite so much sympathy as she expected. Miss Betsy, indeed, thought it was a social descent for Harry, naval surgeons not having had the highest social standing in early days. But Miss Lavinia had a medical ideal of her own. She thought a clever, kind-hearted, high-principled parish doctor in the east of London might have as lofty a career as Henry Martyn or St. Francis Xavier, and might bring light and heavenly comfort into many corners no clerical foot would penetrate.

"And Gracie, darling," she said, "I have found if we want to help people, we must do it in their own way, not in ours. Pray God that Harry may be the best doctor that can be, Gracie; and I think by-and-by you will find all is right, and will give very hearty thanks that you had to give up your own way. I am sure we shall find it so always, Gracie," continued Miss Lavinia; "only it is impossible sometimes to see how."

There was a sad emotion about Miss Lavinia's tones which startled her, and looking up, she saw quiet tears on the thin pale face.

"What is the matter, Miss Lavinia? Can I do anything?"

"It is only that we seem falling a little further down, Gracie," said Miss Lavinia. Two of the parents came last week to say their little girls did

not get on fast enough, which they were sure could not be the children's fault, as both their papas and mammas knew they had remarkable capacities. But they took them away, and it was only just enough before; and I cannot quite see what we are to do, nor can Betsy."

Grace's lips parted for a request, but her eyes met Miss Lavinia's and she did not venture to utter it.

"No, Gracie," she said, shaking her head, "it is of no use saying a word more about that. You have paid us back to the very full all your education could have cost, and much more, I am afraid, than it was worth; and we would rather both of us go to the workhouse than take another penny from you or yours. But oh, Gracie," she continued, putting her face in her handkerchief, with a burst of grief most unlike her tranquil, subdued self—"Gracie, it is for Betsy I am so unhappy. She has tried one pair of glasses after another, until they say there are no stronger to be had. For many months she has done nothing but knit by candle-light, and to-day she made several mistakes in reading the psalms and lessons. She thinks I do not notice it; but oh, Gracie, I think of scarcely anything else! And she has a way of putting out her hand to feel her way, I cannot bear to see. It is like my grandpapa when the cataract was coming on."

Grace caught eagerly at the word, for she also had noticed Miss Betsy's failing sight.

"But cataract can be removed, Miss Lavinia," she said. "Oh, if Harry were only grown up and

a doctor now!" she continued, for the first time seeing some light on Harry's choice.

"I know it can be removed," said Miss Lavinia. "But sometimes it takes years coming on, and all the time the eyes almost useless. But don't breathe a word of it, Grace," she added, as Miss Betsy's brisk knock was heard at the door, and her quick step in the passage—"not a syllable."

Miss Betsy looked flushed when she came in.

"The people are ruder and more republican than ever," she said. "I declare I think one would be treated with more respect in the United States. I have heard they *are* civil to women there, even old women. I just happened to run against the wheel of a costermonger's orange cart, and to throw down a few oranges, in crossing the street, and he swore at me, and asked if I was deaf or blind."

Grace and Miss Lavinia glanced hastily at each other, and colored to as deep a crimson as Miss Betsy herself.

"It is very strange," she continued: "the cart was the same color as the street, and I did not see it at first. I had my spectacles on, too: but there is no one now who knows how to make spectacles as they were made in our grandmamma's time. She could see to read small print by candle-light when she was eighty, with those glasses on; but I broke one of them, and I cannot find any fit to wear. There is a great optician somewhere near the British Museum," she exclaimed, as if struck with a sudden thought; "Grace, will you go with me next Saturday half-holiday?"

Grace appealed with her eyes to Miss Lavinia, and receiving an assenting nod, with a trembling heart she agreed to go.

Accordingly on the following Saturday afternoon, a slight fair girl and a brisk, decisive old lady appeared in the great optician's shop. Pair after pair of spectacles the old lady decisively rejected, not without historical comments depreciating to the science of the century, until the shopman's patience was all but exhausted, and would have been entirely, but for the gentle voice which kept endeavoring to keep peace.

At length appeal was made to a person of more authority in the shop, whose experience and quiet manner had weight with the difficult customer. After a few more futile endeavors to find glasses that would make ordinary print visible:

"Madam," said the person in authority, "would you permit me to look at your eyes."

The elderly lady consented.

"Cataract!" was pronounced decisively; "on one eye in an advanced state. The other probably will not be ready for an operation for some little time."

"Sir," said the elderly lady, firing up, "I regret to see that respectable tradesmen can attempt to account for the deficiency of their instruments, by throwing out most painful insinuations against their customers' organs of vision."

And the aggrieved lady swept hastily out of the shop, in her indignation very nearly casting a further slur on her organs of vision, by running through the glass door. But the young girl who

lingered a moment after her, to deprecate the anger of the optician, and to thank the shopman for his patience, saw the latter give a little scornful shrug, which the older man, however, checked by saying, "Poor lady, it must have been a shock. But she has spirit enough for an operation. She may get all right again." The young girl lingered a moment.

"Would it be quite a year, sir, before anything could be done?"

"Depends on how long the other was forming. If you like," he added, softening to the pleading look, "you may come again, that is," he added with a smile, "if the lady thinks better of me."

"She is very patient generally," pleaded the girl as she hastened away.

In a moment Grace rejoined Miss Betsy.

"What have you been about, Grace? I would not give another look at that impudent creature. And she went on denouncing spectacles, opticians, and science, and commerce in general, as understood in these degenerate days, until they reached the penny steamer. There she sat quiet beside Grace, until they nearly reached their destination, and then in a low, changed voice, she said:

"Gracie, I have been thinking it all over. And I think the man was right. How long did he say it might be before there might be an operation? It was foolish of me to be so angry, but I was startled, and I thought he was trying to impose on me, and I did not listen."

"He said it might be within a year," said Grace,

"and he said," she added, timidly, "if you liked, and thought better of it, he would look again."

"Then that was what you stayed back for, Gracie?" said Miss Betsy, with a sad little attempt at a smile. "Then you believe it?"

Grace could not deny.

"Don't tell Lavinia—don't breathe a word to Lavinia!"

"Wouldn't it be easier for Miss Lavinia to know, than to be suspecting?" said Grace.

"*What*, is Lavinia suspecting?" said Miss Betsy, fiercely. "You have been talking me over! I can't bear it! She has treated me like a child. I am not a foolish, nervous, old woman, to be petted and coaxed, or to coax and pet myself. I always like to know the truth, and the whole truth. I am getting blind, Gracie! *blind*," she said, repeating her words in slow wondering accents, as if to engrave the fact deep on her unbelieving mind. "Blinder and blinder, day by day, week by week, and month by month, until it will be quite dark, and I shall have to be led about like a child."

"And then all the darkness is to go in a moment, and you are to see as well as ever again. What a day that will be, Miss Betsy!"

"But twelvemonths and more, Grace, who knows how much longer. Things always take longer than doctors say. And what is to become of the school!"

"I see no difficulty about that," said Grace timidly, yet resolved to speak out. "You know, Miss Betsy, how I have always longed to learn to

teach. And with you and Miss Lavinia to help, it would be just the very opportunity. Because it would be real, you see, and one never can learn anything real, I think, by playing at it."

Miss Betsy shook her head and said no more until they reached home.

But when they reached the little parlor, where Miss Lavinia was awaiting them in fear and trembling, Grace gave such a cheering narrative of the optician's hopeful view of the case, interwoven with her own loving plans for aiding in the school, that she almost persuaded the sisters for the moment into regarding the twelvemonths' growth of the cataract as a twelvemonths' holiday, especially provided for Miss Betsy, to prepare her for marvelous achievements of tuition and money-making in the future.

Full of her schemes, and sure of sympathy, Grace related the day's history that evening to Mr. Leigh, while Harry was in another room writing his Latin exercise.

"Grace, my darling," he said at length, "I would have given the world to save you from this. But I cannot think what we are to do ourselves. This morning my voice quite broke down in reading the prayers. And the doctor says I must absolutely rest for three months, and not attempt to read a service or a sermon. And if not, I may never be able to be of any use any more."

Mr. Leigh did not say that the doctor had also said he was afraid even rest would be of little use without change of air. Change of air was for him,

he believed, a simple impossibility, and he would not, on any account, have tormented Grace with the thought of it.

But to Mr. Leigh's surprise, Grace did not seem nearly as crushed as he expected by the tidings.

"Father," she said softly, "you and Miss Betsy have been working yourselves to death all your lives, and now God is giving you your holidays in spite of yourselves. And he is going to let me work a little for you. And there is nothing he could have given me in all the world I should have liked half so well."

"My child!" said Mr. Leigh, stroking her hair as she knelt before him; "my own poor, brave, little Gracie."

For Mr. Leigh thought Grace's projects little more than the dreams of a happy child, who knows nothing of the practical difficulties of life.

He was little aware how that child's heart had for years been between him and the practical difficulties of every-day life.

He did not perceive how the child's heart and the sweet childish face had grown into the woman's, with all the childlike freshness in it still.

He did not know how that night and the next morning Grace knelt before the Father in heaven, and felt a heavenly hand laid in blessing on her head, not to soothe only, but to consecrate and to strengthen; and how she rose to her daily work with that light, and joy, and freshness in her heart, which is expressed in the wonderful words, "children of light," and "children of the day."

Chapter XI.

AT the spring equinox of the following year, Lady Katharine Wyse and the equinoctial gales made a simultaneous descent on the Cedars.

The winds tried the strength of every root, and stem and stake in the garden, left the paths strewn with dead branches, threw down a decaying old poplar, gave the stately elms and cedars a fresh grip of the soil, intolerantly swept the atmosphere clear of fog and smoke, sharpened the outline of the distant hills, and generally made every member of the vegetable kingdom understand what it was about, what it was in want of, what it possessed, and what ground it had lost or won.

Lady Katharine, on the other hand, was doing the same kind of work in the animal kingdom within the house—trying the strength of people's principles or the nature of their practice, throwing down tottering theories, snapping off dead fragments of belief, hastening the downfall of morbid fears and worn-out fancies, defining the outlines of all things,

and in general making people clear their mental and moral atmosphere of vagueness and mistiness, and understand what they were seeking, what they had found, what they had lost or won, what they were really thinking, feeling and doing, and whither they were going.

On the whole, she was satisfied with the progress of things and people during her absence. Maurice's journey, she was sure, was the best thing that could have happened for him. Indeed, she was of opinion that in all possible cases, an Egyptian or Syrian tour ought to be insisted on as a part of the preparation for Orders. Mrs. O'Brien, she was glad to find, had made some friends among the poor in the east of London, in whom she took a true, whole-hearted interest, caring for them not as "hands," nor as "cases," nor merely as "souls," but as human beings training for higher and immortal destinies, through all kinds of small and humble earthly cares, and joys, and sorrows. And, moreover, which to Lady Katharine seemed equally important, Mrs. O'Brien had begun to find many other ties which of old had been merely mechanical or conventional, to be living and human. The under housemaid and kitchenmaid, for instance, were no longer known to her merely as wielders of brooms and scrubbing brushes, but as Kitty Dawson and Lucy Saunders, with parents and brothers in far-off country homes—in the colonies, in the army, or on the seas.

Lady Katharine also highly approved of Maurice having given Dan the charge of a little ragged

Infant Sunday-School. The true way to keep Divine truth fresh in the heart, she said, is to keep it flowing. Dan's doubts, she was sure, would be effectually banished by proving the power of the truth on other hearts.

Winnie she consoled for the lack of special "talents," which she occasionally bewailed, by presenting to her the vision of the return of her father and mother from India with a bevy of little brothers and sisters, to whom the absence of engrossing tastes, and the possession of general good sense and capacity would make her the perfection of an eldest sister. So that Winnie began almost to be glad that she had no special gifts beyond a general intelligence, which enabled her to do most things pretty well, and understand most things quickly, and to appreciate others who had these especial gifts, and could excel. In this way the interval between the "finishing" of her own education, and that ideal life of devotion to Maurice and a "mission" at the parsonage, was, Winnie felt, likely to be well filled up.

The only portion of Winifred's world with whose condition and progress Lady Katharine was dissatisfied was that of which Grace Leigh and her father were the centre.

"You have not seen so much of Grace lately, Cecil, Winifred tells me."

"No, Aunt Katharine. It is quite a grief to me, as well as to Winnie. But I cannot tell what to do. Grace is doing wonders. She is earning enough by her paintings to pay a curate for under-

taking her father's duty while he is obliged to rest. And she is helping the Miss Lovels about their school until the cataract in Miss Betsy's eyes is advanced enough for an operation. Grace Leigh is really a wonderful child."

"I don't believe in wonders, Cecil; and least of all, in wonderful children. Children have no right to be wonderful. That is, when children are said to be doing wonders, they are merely being suffered to be spendthrifts, lavishing what ought to last through life on the first fragment of it, and absolutely certain to end in being paupers—a burden on others when they ought to be a help. It is perfectly clear to me what Grace Leigh is doing. She is killing herself by inches, and she must be stopped."

"But, Aunt Katharine, how is any one to stop her? That gentle, yielding creature has the strength of purpose in her of a hero."

"Of course. Do you suppose Deborah, or Joan of Arc, or any of the hero-women, wasted their strength in quarreling who should have the first turn with the pitcher at the well?"

"But what can we do, Aunt Katharine? If to supply the money she earns were the only thing, it would be easy enough. But who is to make her take it?"

"And who is to make Mr. Leigh recover on alms, if she would?" replied Lady Katharine, meditatively. "Well, Cecil, ask them all here, and let us see."

The invitation was given and accepted for the following Monday.

As Grace came up the lawn to meet Winnie, who bounded down to meet her, the happy light in her eyes, the soft flush on her face, the firm, light tread, made Lady Katharine doubt if after all her fears had not been groundless.

"You are grown into quite a tall and stately lady, Grace," she said. "My little Grace is gone, with the snowdrops and the spring violets, and we are come to the Bourbon of roses and the royal Fleurs de lys." For Grace, during the last year, though scarcely seventeen, had grown to that stately height which corresponds so well with calm fair faces; a little above the middle stature, but with that graceful suppleness and ease of carriage which naturally makes you think of a lily, and which wrung even from Rosalie the admission that Mademoiselle Grace knew how to walk.

To the end of her days, "little" was a term of endearment which might be applicable to eager, impulsive Winnie, but scarcely to Grace. Her growth in every way had been that of a creature to be clung to or leant on, rather than to cling and twine. Or rather her clinging was more to stay and uphold what she clung to than to be sustained, except in the one direction in which she sought her strength. And that had drawn her upward.

"That child is more than ever like a Pre-Raphaelite," said Lady Katharine to Mrs. O'Brien. "The appealing, childish look has grown into a tender maidenliness, while the motherliness remains. See the changes in her face as she glances from happy, eager, talking Winnie to her father.

She feels anxious about his sitting in the draught of that window, but she will not rush up to him as I should, to snatch him from the danger, or kindly entreat him to move as you would, Cecil, inflicting on him thereby the miserable self-consciousness of being watched. See, she is asking Winnie's leave. She just creeps away for an instant, closes the window, and now she is talking eagerly again with Winnie, and Mr. Leigh knows nothing about it. And there is her own sweet, soft, ringing laugh again. I am so glad to hear it. She is just the kind of woman a man could bear to be nursed by. But Mr. Leigh looks very worn and anxious, Cecil. I am so glad you thought of arranging an interview with Dr. Dee."

Dr. Dee came in, as if by accident, to luncheon; had a conversation with Mr. Leigh; drew him into talking naturally about his ailments, and cheered him by narratives of similar cases which had ended in complete recovery. But afterwards, when Lady Katharine asked him what he thought, he shook his head and said:

"Nothing for it but change of air. Some might say nothing but Algiers or Cairo. But I suppose that is out of the question. And the South of England, without anxiety and care, would do more than the climate of Egypt, or of Eden, with them. Curates at sixty, Lady Katharine, ought either to be made canons, with no work and much pay, or sent as missionaries among the cannibals, with especial recommendations to their *chefs de cuisine*. But what is the matter with the daughter?"

"Miss Leigh? Do you see anything the matter with her?"

"Yes. I said something to her about the necessity of a change of air for her father, and since then there is a look of distress in her eyes, and a steady spot of soft color on her cheek I don't like to see. She is too young to have too much strain on her."

And Dr. Dee took leave, setting Lady Katharine free to observe Grace, and to think what must be done next.

Grace's expression was indeed changed since she had had those few confidential words with Dr. Dee. Her eyes continually wandered to her father's face, but no longer with the tender, care-taking look of one who felt she was able to shield and help him. Instead, there was an anxious, questioning, wistful gaze, more than once all but melting into tears, which, however, were always repressed with an evident effort to interest herself in what was going on around her.

Lady Katharine noticed the change and understood it, and longed to speak; but there was a gentle dignity about Grace which cut her off from her usual direct and abrupt road to any point she wished to reach, and she could discover no other. It was her very power to help, she felt, which raised the barrier between her and Grace in this her hour of sore need. Lady Katharine could only find an opportunity to say to Grace when she was leaving:

"Your hand is feverish, child. Winnie told me

once Harry said I was like everybody's grandmamma. Now, I never let any of my grandchildren be their own doctors. Therefore, if you do not take care, I shall come and see what you are doing. So write me a bulletin to morrow—you or Harry—or I shall appear on a broomstick. And Mrs. O'Brien can tell you how I can scold. So take care!"

But the next day no bulletin came. Only on the day following day a note from Harry, in a style apparently designed finally to disprove his capacity for ever making sermons:

"DEAR LADY KATHARINE,—Grace would not let me write yesterday, and father does not know I am to-day. But I was afraid you would be angry with Grace and come, so I could not help it. Grace is very ill. At least, Mrs. Treherne says so. And the doctor says nothing. At least, he shakes his head and says there is no saying. It is a sore throat. She took it on Monday. It was very cold as we came home, and I was clumsy and broke the carriage windows. And I shall never forgive myself. At least, I never shall if it is scarlet fever. And Mrs. Treherne says that is the way scarlet fever begins, and most things, she thinks, that are dangerous. And Grace would never let me write if she knew. She keeps saying she shall be quite well in a day or two. But I thought you would be glad to know—at least, that I ought to let you know. And then, if you think Grace is right, you need think nothing more about it; only please, Lady Katharine, I

should like to know what you think. And please let Miss Bertram know. I don't mean let her know what Mrs. Treherne thinks, but about the sore throat.

"Believe me, etc.

"No one can send their love to any one because no one knows about my writing, or I am sure every one would."

"There, Cecil!" exclaimed Lady Katharine, as she threw this letter on the breakfast-table; "exactly what I expected. That child has been killing herself. Illnesses are only symptoms of previous mischief, every one knows. However, now, we will set things all right. Excuse me, Cecil."

And Lady Katharine rose and decisively rang the bell.

"What will you do, Aunt Katharine?"

"Do! Cecil? Go and nurse the poor motherless child at once. Be so good as to tell my maid I want to speak to her instantly," she said to the footman who appeared in answer to the bell. "Excuse my ordering about your servants, Cecil. I forgot I was not at home."

"But, Aunt Katharine," feebly remonstrated Mrs. O'Brien, "if it should be scarlet fever, and infectious."

"I am the very person to go, my dear, evidently. An old woman, with both my sons settled in life, my will made, and all my affairs in perfect order."

"If I could only be of any use," sighed Mrs. O'Brien, "I should so delight to help that dear child."

"Of course you would, Cecil, but you can't. Your husband would not hear of it, to begin with. And, besides, excuse me, but you have not despotism in you for a nurse. Of course, I shall find all the windows shut; the patient distracted with all manner of contradictory recommendations; the doctor's orders supplemented by all manner of traditional quackeries, and Miss Nightingale's 'Notes on Nursing,' systematically contravened in every practicable and impracticable way."

"But, Aunt Katharine, the house is very small, and not at all such as you are accustomed to, and—"

"Cecil! I have been desiring all my life to have the privilege of making myself uncomfortable for the sake of my fellow-creatures. And I have never been able to attain anything beyond helping other people, with the greatest ease and comfort to myself. And now, when, at sixty, the golden opportunity offers itself to me, do you think I shall throw it away? Besides, Cecil," she added, in a grave, low voice, "I remember too well one long night, thirty years ago, when I watched by my own little Evelyn, to let that sweet motherless child be alone now."

And that very evening Lady Katharine had succeeded in establishing herself as head-nurse in Grace's room, in a soft, unrustling dress, prepared to sit up with her for the night. She had gained her point and established herself as commander-in-chief with less difficulty than might have been expected. Mr. Leigh was too anxious about Grace to be at all

overwhelmed with the kindness. It seemed to him only natural that any one who knew Grace should do anything that could be done for her. Mrs. Treherne struck her colors at once to my lady. Mrs. Anderson who had sat up on the previous night, being a woman of a strong character, instinctively recognized the same in another, seeing the repose which Lady Katharine's quiet habit of command gave to the patient. The only contest was with Miss Betsy Lovel, who had no idea of a stranger coming and taking possession of everybody and everything just on account of a wretched little scrap of rank, and because she had been used to having her own way. But she was soon conciliated by the tact which at once conceded her rights in full, as a representative of British institutions in general, and as the oldest friend of Grace's mother.

"I have heard so much of you and your sister," Lady Katharine said, "from that dear grateful child. But I knew you were neither of you quite strong or at leisure just now, and I felt sure you would allow me to supplement your care."

The relief to Grace was unspeakable. In the first place she had some one who would tell her exactly how ill she was, without mystery, and without circumlocution.

"I heard Miss Betsy whispering so long yesterday," she said, "with the doctor and with father, when they had left my room. And when she came back again, she looked so grave, until she saw I was watching her, and then she nodded, and made up such a smile as you do to a sick, fretful child,

and told me in a sprightly voice that I should be all right in no time. And I do so want to know what it is, and I have had no one to ask."

She seemed quite relieved when told it was scarlet fever.

"People get well from that, often, don't they?" she said. "I do so very much want to get well, and soon."

But in the night when she had been lying very still for some time, so that Lady Katharine hoped she was asleep, and crept to the bedside to look, the closed eyes opened at once as eyes that had evidently only been closed by an effort of will; and Grace said:

"Lady Katharine, will you let me say something quite through without stopping?"

"Am I then such a bad listener, Grace?"

"No. But every one seems to think they must not let me speak. And it is so terrible to lie here thinking so fast, and not be allowed to tell any one. So you will listen. If I die, for people do die in scarlet fever, I know; would you go to my workbox? The key of it is in the left hand drawer of the dressing-table, and would you take out the bank notes that are there? There are twenty-five five pound notes, and one ten pound note for my last drawing. And would you, please go to my portfolio and take the finished sketch there to the shop. And would you keep the money and give it to father, every quarter, really that and nothing else. For I feel sure it would be enough, and that he

will not be long here, when I am taken. But if he had it himself, he would never think it would last. I meant it for Harry, and to help about Miss Betsy's operation. But I can't help that, Lady Katharine, can I? It would not do for everything, would it? And if God takes me, He will take care of the rest. I think I have done nearly as much as I could, Lady Katharine. But I could not have foreseen this, could I? And will you do this for me?"

The large bright eyes were fixed with intense earnestness on Lady Katharine's, and she felt it difficult to meet them steadily. But following the current of Grace's thoughts, she went to the dressing-table and took out a key tied with blue ribbon.

"Is this the key, Grace?"

Grace nodded and smiled; "it was my mother's," she said, "and you will do it for me?"

"I will," was the reply; "I will sacredly keep every word you say, Grace, and arrange everything so that your father shall not have an anxiety, and shall owe it all to you."

The strained expression relaxed from the flushed eager face. Grace stretched out her feverish hand, took Lady Katharine's, and kissed it.

"I am so thankful," she said, "it will not make me die an hour sooner to have said this, unless it is God's will."

"Certainly not, my child. And now I am nurse again, and you must obey, and lie still and be quiet."

"Must I go to sleep?"

"Not unless you like. But you must not talk."

A submissive smile came over Grace's face; but after a few minutes' tossing from side to side, she said:

"Would it be very troublesome to you to read to me a little? I could not read my chapters to-day. But I think I could attend to it now."

Lady Katharine began to read the first lesson for the day, but before it was finished, the effort to attend had brought sleep. Chapter after chapter Lady Katharine read on, in a low, monotonous voice; and book after book, until the dawn was reflected with a cold gray light from the looking-glass, and the first cries began to be heard in the streets; and at last Grace awoke, and said, but still in a drowsy voice:

"I am so sorry, I am afraid I have not been listening, Lady Katharine. I thought it was in Deuteronomy, and you are reading Isaiah. Or is my head confused?"

"Don't you think you have probably been sleeping three months, by the calendar?"

Grace smiled a drowsy little smile.

"If I have," she said, "I feel as if I should like to sleep three months longer."

"And you shall, if you like," was the reply; "only after three months you ought to feel a little hungry."

"I do," she said, gladly receiving the veal-jelly Lady Katharine offered.

And from that time the tide turned, and life regained its power.

"In another month, Gracie, you shall recover your personal existence. At present you are only a thing," said Lady Katharine, as she wrapped Grace up in a warm shawl, and led her down to the carriage, where Mr. Leigh and Harry were waiting for them; while Mrs. Treherne and her six children were contemplating with a wonder too impersonal for envy, the stately coachman, with the footman and lady's-maid solemnly installed in the rumble behind.

They were to travel to Combe, in Lady Katharine's carriage, by short stages, to renew the memories of her youth, Lady Katharine said, and to give Grace and Harry a glimpse into the pre-historic days before railways.

"You can think of Homer, Gracie, and fancy yourself Lady Jane Grey if you like," she said.

"But it was Plato, not Homer, Lady Jane Grey was so fond of," said Grace.

"Well, never mind," said Lady Katharine, "the resemblance is stronger than the difference. I have not the least doubt that in similar circumstances you would not have been at all wiser than she was, but would have run your head against any amount of difficulties or dangers, if once you had persuaded yourself it was for the good of religion, or of your relations. But it is of no use, Gracie. It is not so easy to get into the Tower or upon a Martyr's Memorial in these days, especially with a prosaic old woman like me to impede any such glorification."

Grace was perfectly aware that a conflict was impending between Lady Katharine's will and her

own; but she was also aware that the hour for this conflict had not yet come; and she was too confident in her own strength of purpose, and too well aware of the strength of Lady Katharine's position, to risk any of her forces in preliminary skirmishing. Accordingly she resigned herself, and Mr. Leigh, and Harry, for the present, entirely to Lady Katharine's guidance, and to any amount of kindness and happiness that might be destined for them, with a heart overflowing with gratitude and peace.

They were not posting, but travelling with Lady Katharine's own horses, so that they took the journey in easy stages; one stage usually in the early morning, and another in the cool of the evening; resting through the heat of the day at some pleasant country inn, where they could explore delicious woodland nooks by brooks and rivers, or ramble over open downs; or at other times, in some old historical city, with cathedral, and castle, and relics of the battles and homes of centuries ago. Morning after morning, and evening after evening, one pleasant picture after another photographed itself forever on Grace's memory, as they passed by orchards, snowy or rosy with pear or apple blossoms, and smelt the fragrance of the hawthorn hedges, and watched the sheep grazing on the crisp grass of the hills, or the cattle on the deep-green meadows, by stately parks, and quiet farmsteads hidden amongst the foliage of old trees; and the map of England was transformed for her into a series of pictures of English homes.

Westward and westward they went, past the

chalkdowns where King Alfred's first victories were won; past that solitary sacred circle of stones whose history is lost in a past so far off that it makes King Alfred seem like a contemporary, until they reached the deep Combes and Tors of the West Country, whose antiquities stretch beyond the centuries of the historian into the millenniums of the geologist, where moorland streams rush down into deep wooded valleys, from springs hidden at the base of old granite tors; where the boldness of mountain outline is combined with the richness of southern vegetation; and the valleys springing from the feet of gigantic hills of bare rock, soften into lovely ferny dells, and end in creeks clothed with luxuriant wood to the edge of the green, quiet sea, until at length they reached the first lodge of Combe Abbey, and looked down on the hills folding over each other to form a rest for the gray old towers which rose above the soft masses of wood.

It was a great delight to Grace to visit the old place again, and to discover how much new beauty she had learnt to see in it; how every tree, and flower, and every form and tint, seemed to enshrine new depths of life and glory, whilst, nevertheless, the rapture of the childish joy with which she had first looked down into the green-sea world below, or up through the spaces of translucent green leaves into the blue-sky world above, was as keen as ever. Where she had seen one tint in sea and sky, she now saw thousands; where she had heard one mingled tide of music, she could now discriminate countless voices and instruments, and the harmony

of innumerable interwoven melodies; and yet the song of one lark, soaring as it sung, or the mingling of sea and sky in every sunset, brought her delight as fresh as at first. Those to whom the world is above all a church—a place of worship rather than a picture gallery or an orchestra—will always find fresh beauty in its pictures, and new depths in its songs. The harmonies which are the natural speech of adoration will never weary, the colors which shine on us through the pauses of the Psalm and carry on its strains, will never pall. It is only those to whom nature is degraded from a temple into a mere gallery of art, or a quarry from which to carve illustrations, who can ever find the pathetic monotony of her repetitions stale or "vain."

And to Grace Leigh the world was, first of all, a cathedral; and next, the sea-shore of the Iliad or the sea of the Odyssey of human life.

Moreover, she had an especial delight in this visit because of its being in a different season from the last. Her first visit to Combe had been in the full-grown, silent, stationary days of summer, and now it was spring. Every day brought change, and all the change was growth. To Grace it seemed like being taken by a great artist into his studio and shown the growth of his thoughts from bud to blossom—from sketch to finished picture. It was like being taken by the hand by the gracious Mother Nature herself, and led into her nursery, and by the cradles of her babes being told in soft tones, like lullabies, old stories of her own childhood, ever renewing itself from spring to spring.

Every bank of those deep West Country lanes was a garden of primroses and violets; and soon the green glades of every wood were shot with the lustrous blue of innumerable hyacinths, while above them the birds sang—no chance bursts of casual music, but their sweetest home songs, waking their nestlings into life with melody.

And then the colors! Instead of the deep even greens of summer, or the gorgeous definite crimson and gold and purple of autumn, there were those translucent greens, and melting grays, and indescribable, ever-changing opals which no pencil can attempt and no memory recall, which need to be repeated year by year before our eyes that we may believe them possible, or remember what they were.

And all this beauty was not the languid lulling loveliness of a season, but the beauty of life and hope, which braced Grace Leigh's mind and heart, as the fresh sea-breezes braced her nerves and brought color into her cheek; until she felt strong enough for anything, and counted it almost a joy as she looked at her father to think how he needed her to work for him. For Mr. Leigh's voice was coming back, so that her chief anxiety was over, and she thought his remaining weakness was merely that infirmity of age which she knew must come, and which all her life it had been her prayer that she might have the privilege of soothing and supporting. Poor child, she never thought of the time when all her soothing would be in vain, and her support no longer needed. All her visions of life went no further than the long vistas of a pathway

with the three walking in it; that one beloved, revered form growing a little feebler and more in want of support from year to year, and the two beside it, year by year, more able to give it. This was Grace's dream of life, and after that heaven; a "place prepared" for all, a Father's House, a mother there to welcome; and One better and dearer than mother, father, or brother binding all together in the might of His personal all-embracing love.

It was the Sunday of Grace Leigh's first Communion. She had been confirmed before her illness, and this day she had received for the first time from her father's hands the cup and bread of the communion of the body and blood of Christ. And now, after the afternoon service, she had wandered with her father to the sea-shore, and they were sitting on a point of rock which jutted out far into the sea. The receding tide was making quiet music to their quiet thoughts, as it plashed softly round the sea-weed which it floated, and for a long time they did not speak.

Mr. Leigh was watching Grace, and Grace was looking down into the sea. He saw that tears were trembling under her drooping eyelids, and at length he laid his hand on hers and said:

"It is a great day for you, Gracie."

She looked up, and the bright smile showed the source of the tears.

"Oh, father," she said, "how good it was of our Lord not to entrust the deepest thing of all to

words. Words seem always to have some limit; or they bring things before us only one by one. But *this* that He told us to do in remembrance of Him beams the whole Truth on us at once, does it not? We seem at once at the foot of the Cross, and at the foot of the Throne. We seem at once the cause of His agony and the crown of His rejoicing. We seem face to face with Him Himself. He gave Himself for us, and He is giving Himself to us. And we see our sin and our redemption, and Calvary and the marriage-supper all in Him in, Himself. He needs to say nothing, but *He is there.* And we need to say nothing for He knows us through and through, and loves us. Is it not wonderful? Must it not be almost as good and beautiful as dying and going to be with Him in Paradise?"

He looked at her with unspeakable tenderness, and after a few minutes' silence he said:

"Ah, Gracie, my poor child, we are not in Paradise yet. I tremble sometimes at the weary way that may lie before you."

There was something in his tone that fell on her like a death-chill. She looked up anxiously and said:

"It is getting near sunset, father; we had better go back before we feel the night air. But you do not feel ill?"

"I do not feel worse," he said; "but at sixty-one naturally thinks more for oneself of the way behind than of the way before. But I want *you* to be fortified for the way before you. The world is not all Combe, Gracie, and there are many battles to be fought."

"Oh, Father," she said, "I like to think of the battles. It is not like the Iliad, you know," she added with some hesitation. "Hector's side *is* to win. It is you who have the victory, and not Cousin Felix."

"I am to have the victory over Cousin Felix?" he said, half puzzled and half purposely misinterpreting.

"No, no, father!" she said, "you know what I mean. I mean that the people who sacrifice themselves and not the people who succeed here, are the real conquerors, are they not? I do like to think of this life as an Iliad and an Odyssey, father; and of all the world as the great battle-plain on the shores of the great sea; or, as the great sea itself on which we are going home, through a thousand perils, but sure to reach the Home, not too late and not shipwrecked, but enriched and strengthened by every battle and every storm."

"My warlike little Gracie," he said, "that comes of learning Greek."

"Oh, no, father!" she replied. "You know it is all in the Bible, and in the baptismal service. 'Good soldiers of Jesus Christ,' and 'the waves of this troublesome world.' That is our Iliad and our Odyssey, is it not?"

The next day Grace observed that Lady Katharine was in and out all the morning far more than usual, and that something mysterious was going on in the background. And in the evening they were all taken to see a pretty rose-covered cottage in the

village, which had been recently furnished. Lady Katharine prolonged the inspection of the rooms and the various arrangements, rather to Grace's perplexity; and, moreover, kept nervously and surreptitiously creeping to the windows, looking up the village street, and then saying it was of no consequence, in a nervous way, quite unlike herself; until at the sound of approaching wheels and the ostentatious crack of a post-boy's whip, she hastily sent Grace down stairs to see who was coming.

Just as Grace reached the door of the house, a carriage stopped at it; the steps were let down with an artistic flourish by the Abbey footman, and two elderly ladies walked up the little garden, the paler and feebler-looking guiding and supporting the brisker and stronger of the two.

"Miss Betsy! Miss Lavinia!"

And after a tumult of kisses and tears, and questions to which no one waited for an answer, and explanations made inexplicable by absence of context, the two old ladies were safely deposited in the cheery little parlor, where tea was laid around a large vase of fresh flowers.

"Where is Lady Katharine?" exclaimed Grace, at length. "She sent me to see who was coming, and I forgot all about my being her messenger."

Upstairs and downstairs Lady Katharine was sought in vain, until a servant came from the Abbey to assist in unpacking the ladies' boxes, and to say with her ladyship's apologies to the Miss Lovels, that her ladyship had gone home on urgent business, but she hoped Miss Leigh would make the

ladies comfortable, that Mr. Leigh would fetch her home, and her ladyship would call to-morrow.

Gradually the rush of greetings subsided over the tea-table into a stream of quiet talk.

"So you know nothing about it, Gracie," said Miss Betsy. "Well, Lavinia, I do hope we are doing right. It seems to me too pleasant to be right. But Lavinia says it is as bad as the Trappist monks to say that, and we ought to take all from God and from Lady Katharine, as simply as children, and be thankful. But I never thought it would be such a paradise of a place. Lady Katharine said it was only a little cottage built by her husband, for which they could find no tenant, and it would be quite a kindness for us to come and take care of it. It was rather ruinous, she wrote, and a little damp, and wanted fires and airing, but she hoped we should not find it uncomfortable. But this is a paradise, indeed," concluded Miss Betsy, wiping her eyes; "two parlors, and such a kitchen, and a bedroom with such sweet-smelling things round the window. But I suppose it cannot be helped! And such an easy flight of stairs, just made for a poor blind, helpless old creature like me!"

"Oh, Mr. Leigh," she resumed, when he arrived, "do you think we were right in coming? Lavinia says she is sure. But then she always sees everything as if it were all from God with nothing between. And I can't feel quite so clear. I certainly can't teach until I have my eyes again, and I couldn't let Grace kill herself for us, and Lady Katharine

said she would, so what was there to do? And it's only till I can see again."

Mr. Leigh thought there was nothing to be done but to thank God and take courage.

But that evening as they walked home, he said to Grace, in a manner remarkably decisive for him:

"Gracie, I must be at home again next Sunday. My voice is quite strong again. And it is the greatest blessing I have to be able to work for our daily bread. I would not give it up for the world."

Grace was quite of the same mind.

Lady Katharine did not attempt to oppose Mr. Leigh's decision, but with Grace she made a serious remonstrance.

"Do you think, Gracie," she said, "that I do not see what makes you run away from me in this unceremonious way? But depend upon it, Miss Lavinia's is the true independence. She depends on God, and takes all He sends quite simply, no matter through whose hand it comes. He might so easily, if it had seemed good to Him, have made your father owner of Combe, and of a hundred Combes, and me a helpless, blind old creature; and would you have called it humility if I had refused to allow you to help and cheer me, as you would have Gracie, only ten thousand times better and more sweetly than I ever can- poor blundering old woman that I am?"

"Please do not misunderstand us, Lady Katharine," said Grace. "If my father could do nothing for us, and we could do nothing for him, I would

be as glad and as grateful to take our daily bread from you, as if it were manna straight from Heaven; and more glad, I think, because your hand would be so much nicer than the clouds or the ravens; and it would be sweet to have to be grateful to you as well as to God. But father can preach, thank God; and if he could not, I can paint. And I cannot, indeed I never can, give up the joy of helping him to any one on earth. I don't think God would ever command it. And besides, by-and-by, I am sure it will be so much better for Harry. And it was you, dear Lady Katharine, who had me taught to paint, so it is all really from you after all."

Lady Katharine was vanquished.

"Well," she said, "Gracie, there never would have been any fairy tales with such unmanageable Cinderellas as you. So you must go your own willful way. And God bless you after all. For after all life is not a fairy tale, and a fairy godmother's providence is a very poor thing compared with God's."

The only concession Lady Katharine could obtain was one more week's sojourn, in order to make the Miss Lovels feel more at home; to initiate them into the mysteries of drying sea-weeds, constructing aquariums, and to guide them to all the walks accessible, as Miss Betsy phrased it, to the blind and the lame.

"I am very happy here, Grace, my dear," said Miss Betsy as she wished Grace good-bye. "At least I am sure I ought to be. The air seems doing Lavinia so much good. It seems as if, after all,

she might prove to be the strong one. And when once more I can see and she can walk, we may do wonders again with the Academy. For this is only a holiday, you know, Grace my dear. And it would be no holiday to me, I must confess, if I did not look forward to working again when it is over. I hope Lady Katharine quite understands that, my dear. And besides," she added confidentially, "I wouldn't tell Lady Katharine or Lavinia for the world. But I do rather miss the streets; the sound of the wheels, and the cries, and going to Mrs. Treherne's, and the baker's, and the butcher's, and managing everything. You see I am not poetical, Grace, my dear; and it does seem to me rather too much like a churchyard here; too much like always Sunday. Of course, my dear, I like Sunday in its place, once a week. But there seems too little difference. And I do miss your father's afternoon sermons and his reading the service. And then I knew the people and the places, and the people knew me. And here no one knows anything about us. We seem dropped in among them like a stray chapter of a story-book. And I do feel a little, too, as if they thought themselves wiser. A little lad quite laughed at Lavinia the other day, for asking what a field of turnips was. The very babies here know more about such things than we do. And of course they can't understand how much more we know about other things, about the city, St. Paul's, and Westminster Abbey, and the shops, and the Pinnock's Goldsmiths and the painting on velvet. So that we must seem like two old simpletons to

them. And that's humiliating. For things do look so different in the fields and in the shop-windows. But don't say a word about this, Grace, my dear. I am sure Lady Katharine and every one is kindness itself, and I am very happy. Or Lavinia is, and if I am not it is my own fault. Only a little as if I had been dead and buried, and had risen up again somewhere else, I didn't quite know where. Not the real resurrection, you understand Grace, my dear; of course, that will be in heaven, and I trust we shall all know where we are, and feel at home there. At least after a time. But we've got a great deal to go through, before that, my dear. And don't be anxious about Mr. Leigh, Grace, my dear; not that it was the resurrection that made me think of him. His voice is quite strong again; and he looks so much better, only a little flushed sometimes. And be sure, Grace, my dear, you give him the mixture whenever he coughs. I have made some in a large bottle, I hope you'll find room for it."

And with kisses and ill-suppressed sobs, mingled with assurances of being very happy, Miss Betsy wished Grace good-bye.

But while she was settling the traditional bottle of cough-mixture, Miss Lavinia said her farewell in far fewer words.

"Grace, darling," she said "we shall pray for you night and day. Here are too little shell pincushions for little Fan, and for the poor little maid of all work at our old lodgings. Mr. Treherne promised to look after her. Betsy and I are very grateful to God and to Lady Katharine, more than we

can ever say. And I do trust it will be given to Betsy to see again, and to me to get stronger, and then to come back and live near you in the old place, darling." But there Miss Lavinia's voice broke down, and she only added, after a pause, "One by one, Grace, He leads us, and day by day."

Thus it was evident that the dreary lodgings in the dingy streets of the east of London had been glorified into a home of fond memories and hopes to these sisters—a home of toil and of affection, which no "paradise" of hills and woods and gardens could replace in their hearts. In so many senses besides the highest, the things which are seen are temporal, and the things which are not seen are eternal.

"Well, Mrs. Treherne," said Grace, the morning after their return, when the good landlady was evidently lingering for a gossip, as she removed the breakfast things, "don't you think the country has done wonders for us all?"

"Master Harry do look as hearty as a sea-captain, and you Miss Grace as rosy as a peach. And Mr. Leigh *can* speak above a whisper again. He certainly can. And that is something."

"My father says he feels up to anything," said Grace.

"No doubt he do, poor gentleman" was the reply; "that's just what I should expect, Miss Grace."

"Don't you really think him looking better, Mrs. Treherne?" said Grace, anxiously.

"Well, I can't be a hypocrite, Miss Grace, to save

my life. And it wouldn't be doing fairly by you if I was to be."

"I had much rather you would say what you think, Mrs. Treherne. I do so want always to know the truth. But I did think he was really stronger. What do you see in him that makes you think not?"

"Well Miss Grace, I am no doctor, and I never set up for any such thing. But to my mind, Mr. Leigh has a scooped-out life look in his face, and something hollow and scooped-out in his voice, and a kind of stoop."

"My father is so tall and thin, Mrs. Treherne, and being so near-sighted, you know he always did stoop," said Grace, eagerly.

"Very true Miss Grace, my dear. I'd rather you wouldn't ask me. I'm no doctor, as I said, and no prophet; and after all, as Caleb Treherne says, it's blasphemy to doubt what the Almighty can do."

And beyond that Mrs. Treherne would not go with Grace. But with her husband she was far more definite.

"All right, Caleb Treherne," she said, repeating his words with scornful emphasis." Poor dear Mr. Leigh's voice all right! That shows what men's ears are worth, the best of them. No need for those trumpets and machines, if it had been the Almighty's will that women should have been the doctors! Why Mr. Leigh's voice tells as plain a tale as though you struck a spoon on mother's best china sugar-basin, that Fan cracked the first month she came."

"Don't say too much about it to Miss Grace," said Caleb, compassionately. "They say the best doctors are deceived sometimes. So even you might be wrong."

"They may be," retorted Mrs. Treherne, solemnly, "attending to their instruments and inventions instead of to their senses, and to God's natural signs! And as to Miss Grace, do you think no body but yourself, Caleb Treherne, have got a heart for her, poor lamb? Of course if she asks, I'm not going to demean myself to tell a lie. But beyond that no one with a natural woman's heart need to go. Poor innocent! There's enough before her, without my hurrying her to find things out," concluded Mrs. Treherne, believing that the vague consolatory words with which she had closed the conversation had quite lulled Grace's fears.

But Grace was not given to quelling fears by closing doors and shutting them in. Her way was rather to take the light and explore every corner of the dark chambers, light and fresh air being the great elements of the materia medica, mental, moral or physical, known to Grace.

But into the darkness of these fears she had no light which could penetrate. The longer she gazed and tried to see into it, the darker this darkness grew. She who had always so tried and prayed to know the truth about everything, could she after all have been deceiving herself? Were she and Harry really too much bound up with this peril to comprehend it? She wished Mr. Bertram could return, and tell her what he thought. His words

and looks were always truth itself. She wondered when he would return. Her thoughts recurred to his parable of the vine entwined around the ruin. How much had fallen into the ruin since he told it! all her dreams about Harry and his parish; all the plans she had felt so strong to carry out for the support of the Miss Lovels. She had certainly proved plainly enough that she was not the stay of the temple; but if not the roof merely, but the very pillar around which the vine had entwined itself were to fall, what would become of the vine then? Would the leaves lie trailing, withered, on the ground, and the grapes shrivel as they lay?

Maurice's parable led her thoughts to another parable of a sacred Vine. "Not *a* vine," she thought, "but The Vine, the true Vine. That Vine *is* the stay and pillar of heaven and earth. I am not a vine at all, only a branch; I and Father and Mr. Bertram and all of us. The fruit of that Vine never fails. Only, if one branch begins to set itself up as the Vine, then not the fruit only, but the branch itself withers. Oh how happy," she concluded, "and how strong it makes one to know one is not a wretched little isolated independent *plant*, but a *branch*—a branch in the true Vine. I wonder if it is to find out more what this means, that we are allowed to droop and be disappointed. I wonder if the disappointments *are* the pruning, and if the husbandman has indeed been pruning me, and not only me but Father and Miss Lavinia and poor Dan and all of us. Not only not a pillar of the temple, but not a vine, but only a branch! And the Vine is so strong

and full of life. I will tell Mr. Bertram when he comes back how happy it makes me to think of this."

Thus, although Grace saw no clearing in the dark forest of anxieties Mrs. Treherne had conjured up, her heart was lightened by this conviction, as by a breath of fresh air from heaven. And then she remembered how Mrs. Treherne had had presentiments long ago, which had not come true. She recalled that snowy night so very long ago, when terrified out of all minor terrors by prognostications of Mrs. Treherne's, scarcely less terrible than these, she had crept through the snow to ask Mr. Bertram to take her father's duty. And then she fell into a long musing as to how much more difficult it would be to do such a thing now, although they all knew Mr. Bertram so much better, and had proved his kindness so often. Why was this? Had she grown more conventional and worldly, or less brave? One thing, however, she could do. She could go and ask her old friend Mrs. Anderson what she thought of Mr. Leigh. On Mrs. Anderson's judgment she could always rely. But to her dismay, when she entered the well-known baker's shop, a spruce strange man stood behind the counter, most anxious to oblige his supposed customer, but whose countenance fell when he found she had only come to inquire for her old friend. The old gentleman was dead, he said, and he had bought the goodwill, and very little he found it worth, and the old lady had been gone these ten days, bag and baggage; but where, it was not for him to say. The business was now his, and was to be conducted on the newest and most

accomodating principles, as she would see from the card which he handed her.

"Mrs. Anderson, Miss Grace," explained Mrs. Treherne on Grace's return; "she is gone to nurse that poor fussy lady, Mrs. Dee, and I wish her joy of her work. She hurt herself, poor lady, by slipping in her hurrisome way on a bit of orange-peel; and they do say she is as peevish and helpless as a child, and that no one could keep her quiet, till Mrs. Anderson went to her."

Grace went up stairs to her solitary room, and felt rather desolate. Every one seemed gone: Mr. Bertram, the Miss Lovels, and now Mrs. Anderson. But she was too busy to brood over troubles; and taking out her portfolio of sketches made at Combe, she sat down to group some scattered blossoms and tufts of moss into a picture, and was contentedly humming to an improvised chant Miss Lavinia's farewell words, "*One by one, and day by day*," over and over again, in rather a Bedouin fashion, when a carriage stopped at the door, a ringing voice filled the house with life and music, and Winnie, rushing into the room, overwhelmed her with kisses, exclaiming "Maurice, Gracie! Maurice has come, never to go away again. Are you not, Maurice?" she continued, turning to her brother as he followed her. "And he is *glad* to come back, Gracie. He doesn't care for all those beautiful places, nor for a creature he has seen a thousandth part as much as he does for his poor old parish, and for us. Nothing like it, Maurice, do you? Didn't you say so? For us and Mr. Leigh and Grace and all of us. And

please, Grace, if you think Mr. Leigh would like it, Maurice said we might send away the carriage and stay to tea."

"A dangerous confidant, Winnie," said Maurice. But they stayed.

Grace had so many things about which she wished to consult Mr. Bertram, that now he was actually there she had not the least idea where to begin. And Maurice himself seemed still more spellbound and silent. He stood and turned over her drawings rather absently, Grace thought, and at length he said, as if to himself:

"The same touch; but what a difference. These flowers seem to have come forth from their detached dreamy child-life into the large world, and to have begun their life-story. The lilies are floating on the stream. This little moss is tenderly cushioning a child's grave. This blue gentian is finding or making a rest and home even among the snows. This little redbreast, plucking the red berries from the snow-covered twig of thorn, does not need to have 'Consider the fowls of the air' written underneath. These are not flower-paintings only. They are poems."

"I meant them to be a kind of illuminated texts, or hymns," said Grace.

"Are they not beautiful?" said Winnie, eagerly. "Is not our Gracie really a genius now, Maurice?"

"But why are so many of them about snow and winter?" he asked.

"It *was* winter," said Grace; "and then so many wintry things were happening," she added, softly.

Miss Betsy Lovel's blindness, and Harry not being a clergyman, and my father's voice—"

He looked at her anxiously.

"I know," he said, sadly, "too much of human life has passed into the life of these flowers."

"You know about Miss Betsy, then, and Harry," she said, very glad not to have to explain.

"I don't think it so very wintry about Harry," he said, half smiling.

"But have you seen my father?" Grace asked, timidly.

"Only for a minute or two. Mr. Leigh was going to the workhouse, but he would be at home, he said, in less than an hour."

"Of course, then, you cannot understand whether he is looking better or not. Besides," she added (forearming herself, as she had grown so used to do against adverse judgments), "you did not see him when he was really ill."

He did not speak. He comprehended her meaning but too well.

"You did not think him looking really ill?" she said, with a trembling voice. "I know you cannot tell me anything but the truth."

"I thought Mr. Leigh looked older. But we all are that. Only not exactly in the same way."

Just then a slow step was heard on the stairs and Mr. Leigh entered, flushed and tired, and so put an end to the conversation.

"Do you think Mr. Leigh looking very ill, Maurice?" said Winnie, as they drove home together, "he seemed so bright and full of life to-night."

"A little too bright, I am afraid," said Maurice, gravely.

"But is not our Gracie the very same, dear darling, gentle, determined, beautiful, sweet, happy Grace as ever?"

"The same, yet very different, I think," he said.

"Oh, of course. The very same, only a thousand times better, as she will always go on being for ever," said Winnie, involving herself in great arithmetical difficulties.

"I did not say better, but different, Winnie," said Maurice. "Sometimes it seemed as if I must have known her before we were born, in some other life, I seemed to know so strangely what she meant to say. And sometimes, it seemed as if I had never seen her before this evening. She seemed so new and so far off, and so different from what she was, and yet from every one else in the world."

"Different from every one else in the world; I should think Grace was, Maurice," said Winnie, not altogether satisfied with his appreciation of her friend, and not a little perplexed as to whether he had brought home any strange Oriental idea about the transmigration of souls. "Different from what she was! I cannot think what you mean, Maurice; I am sure she is always the very same true, dear, affectionate Grace to me. And I thought she was quite the same to you. Only a little quieter, because you had both so much more to say, of course, than you could say. And that always makes people quiet."

"I suppose it does," said Maurice laughing, "but

you learned that, I presume, little sister, rather from observation than from experience."

"From both," replied Winnie, sententiously. "All that first evening after you came home, I could do nothing but sit quite silent and look at you, don't you remember? And that is the reason why I have had such a quantity to say ever since. And so you will find it is with Grace, when once she begins."

"Shall I?" he said demurely. "And when do you think that will be?"

"That depends, as Rosalie says," replied Winnie. Whereupon she plunged into a series of domestic narratives, and problems in the science of life, which occupied her entirely until they reached the Cedars.

Lady Katharine, on the other hand, wrote to say she had always thought of it, and had had much difficulty in preventing herself from spoiling everything by taking on herself that rôle of fairy-godmother, in which it was evident she succeeded so badly.

But the immediate change in Grace Leigh's life was, simply, that there were three instead of two to watch beside her father's sick bed.

For the slow downward steps of decline went steadily on. But steadily as the feeble steps went downwards, the spirit seemed to rise.

In that sick room there prevailed always a sacred joyous calm, like a Saturday afternoon holiday, when the work of the week is done, and its traffic

is over, and its cares are laid aside, and the next morning is to bring the Day of Rest, and Festival, and Worship, of church-bells and church music; the first day of the new life.

"I wish I could shake hands with Cousin Felix once more," he said one morning to Grace. "Has little Maud written to say how he is to-day?"

"She says two doctors come now, father, instead of one; and they say the attack might pass off, with care and quiet, but that Mr. Hunter is a difficult patient to treat. He has so many things to manage, Maud says, and he will see so many people on business. He is sure there are so many things no one can conduct successfully but himself."

"Ah! Gracie," said Mr. Leigh, "you see the most successful life must leave many things unfinished at last, as well as the least successful, perhaps more. It is well, perhaps, after all, not to have too many things to arrange and set in order at last."

"There is a difference, is there not," said Maurice

ERRATUM.

Owing to an accidental transfer of Manuscript in the Printing Office, an error occurred, which the reader will kindly correct as follows: End Chapter XI. with the word "Cedars," third paragraph, page 432. Transfer the remaining portion of the Chapter, in the order in which it stands, beginning with fourth paragraph, "Lady Katharine," to the end of last Chapter, page 479, making it the concluding portion of the volume. This error was not discovered until the books were bound.

great house in Bedford Square, as well as in the poor lodgings in the East of London.

A poor irritable invalid lay there in a darkened chamber, vainly striving to contend with disease as he had so long successfully contended with other difficulties in his life. Doctor after doctor had been consulted and dismissed. Mr. Hunter only wished he had been a medical man himself, and he would not have been baffled by such a trifling attack as this. Servants and children alike dreaded the impatient dissatisfaction of the invalid with everything that was done for him. Indeed, one child after another discovered various reasons, unanswerable to themselves, for not troubling themselves with much of the old man's company. Plainly it did him no good, they said, and gave him no pleasure to see them. The sons and daughters, therefore, concluded they were rendering him the greatest service by doing what he had always told them to do, as the first end of life, namely, to look after their own affairs. The sons went to their business or their amusements, and the daughters frequently spent much of their time at the houses of various friends. It was their duty, they said, to keep the house quiet for poor dear papa, therefore they could not entertain at home, and at the same time it would, evidently, be contrary to all his maxims to allow themselves to drop out of sight and be forgotten. Mrs. Felix Hunter, meanwhile, was much occupied in furnishing the new house in Belgravia. An occupation, she observed, naturally very uncongenial to her under the circumstances, but she had never been in

the habit of yielding to her own feelings, and dear Mr. Hunter was so particular about having everything in the first style, that she could not answer it to her conscience to leave these things to tradesmen, especially as all the medical men agreed that quiet was the one essential for Mr. Hunter; and Maud, poor child, was always ready to remain with him. It was in fact quite an occupation for Maud, and besides, Mr. Hunter liked the room so hot, and want of air, unhappily, was the one thing she could not stand, and, happily, Maud did not in the least suffer from it. So that every thing really seemed to fit in remarkably.

Thus it happened that Maud's little chair was wheeled continually near her father's bed or sofa; and she read to him newspapers and novels nearly all day long, content with the reward of being allowed to read a chapter in the Bible, or a hymn, morning and evening.

At first it frightened her very much to read aloud to her father; and Mr. Hunter did not increase her courage by his frequent disadvantageous comparisons between her reading and her sister's, and his continual complaints that the newspapers were all humbug, and the novels all trash.

But Maud being quite acquiescent in any amount of depreciation of herself, and moreover feeling sure that in this particular instance she had the one vocation to her work which she was persuaded was the only vocation she could ever have to any work, namely, that there was no one else to do it, gradually grew bolder. And gradually Mr. Hunter grew

accustomed to her voice; and although he never indulged in the extravagance of praise or thanks, his complaints became fewer, until Maud's chief perplexity grew to be that he did not like to spare her an hour from his side.

"What have you been doing child?" he said, fretfully, one day. "I thought you were never coming back, like the rest."

"I was only writing a little note to Grace Leigh, papa."

"You are always writing little notes to Grace Leigh. I can't think what you see in those Leighs, I am sure." Then after a pause: "Does Grace Leigh write to you? What can she find to say?"

"She says to-day, papa," replied Maud, eagerly seizing the opportunity, "that Mr. Leigh thinks so much about you, and wants to know how you are?"

"I am sure I am much obliged to Mr. Leigh," was the grim reply. "I suppose he has not much else to think of, that he should be so concerned about me."

"May I send your kind remembrances," persevered Maud, "and say you hope Mr. Leigh is better?"

"What is the use? Mr. Leigh will never be better. And as to me, if you want to say anything, you had better say that if there were a doctor worth his salt in the kingdom, I should have been as well as ever weeks ago."

Nevertheless, after this, a link seemed to spring up between the invalids. Mr. Hunter frequently

asked, although in rather an ungracious way, how Mr. Leigh was. And then came a few words from Mr. Leigh expressive of the faith and hope which sustained him, and which he trusted would also sustain Mr. Hunter.

"I don't want to be sustained," said Mr. Hunter fiercely, when Maud gave this message. "What does he mean? He speaks as if I were dying, like himself. Tell him I expect to go to Deerham Park, and get my new steam plough to work in a week or two. And don't go and put in any texts, child, I can't endure cant."

Yet his thoughts seemed to revert, beyond his own control, to Mr. Leigh's sick-bed. And one evening he said, bitterly, when he had expressed a wish that his daughter Alicia would come and read to him, and had been told that she was so sorry, but Lady de Wint had reserved a seat expressly for Alicia that very evening in her opera-box, and Alicia was sure Mr. Hunter would not like Lady de Wint to be neglected:

"I suppose Grace Leigh would think it more important not to neglect her sick father." And then suddenly looking at Maud with a most unusual tenderness, he added: "Poor little Maud. It is a good thing, perhaps, after all, to have one little girl whose life hasn't been such a success as to make her feel her father's sick-room a prison to escape from whenever she can."

Maud tried to defend her sisters, but he replied with an indescribable bitterness: "Nonsense, child; you know nothing about it. They are a set of self-

seeking worldly girls. And I have made them so. I have spent my life in making them so."

After this, Mr. Hunter seemed to make less effort to conceal his interest in Mr. Leigh.

He grew to receive the messages of Christian faith and love which came from the dying curate's sick-bed with undisguised pleasure, and even to ask anxiously for a letter when none arrived. And once he sent a message to say he should like to see Grace if she could spare him an hour. Yet when she came, he seemed to have little to say to her except a few broken inquiries and vague good wishes, until she rose to leave, when he said: "You are a good, affectionate child, Grace, and so is this little Maud. God will reward you both. He knows best how. Our rewards are very poor. Tell your father, perhaps his life has been the success and mine the failure, after all. It is late to find it out. But perhaps not too late. Maud won't hear me say too late. And I hope she may be right. Be kind to Maud, Grace Leigh. Be kind to my little Maud."

And the feeble hand that lay in Grace's, too feeble to return the pressure of hers, appealed to her with irresistible force of entreaty. She gave one farewell look at the eyes which followed her so wistfully, and turned silently away, praying that she might never more disbelieve, as she feared she sometimes had, in the grace of God, or imagine there was an impassable gulf between the best human being on earth and the worst.

When she reported this interview to Mr. Leigh,

a deep and joyful awe came over his face, like the shadow of an unseen heavenly presence. For some time he said nothing. And then at intervals:

"Children, the Holy Catholic Church is wider and higher, and its gate more open than we any of us imagine."

Then:

"Perhaps it would be ungrateful for me to think I took the wrong turning, after all."

And afterwards in slow broken utterances, like sacred sentences spoken from before the altar:

"I have been thinking of our last sunset at Combe, and how like that close of day was to the close of life. The clouds, which like our earthly trials, throw their shadows on us by day, become illuminated like the white robes of saints floating in the glory of God. Then as the sun sinks further they become, not merely illuminated, but luminous torches burning in the deepening blue of Heaven. Our sorrows are not only lit up by faith. Of the sorrow itself is born the joy. And then the atmosphere of earth disappears altogether and there are the stars. Perfumes, slumbering since the dews of dawn were dried, breathe out again from the censers of a million flowers. It is dawn once more; the dawn of night and of the stars. From the twilight of the first dawn the earth shone forth. From this twilight, Heaven."

And not many weeks afterwards, within a week of each other, two funeral processions passed through the crowds of the great city. One, with

all the pomp of plumes and jet-black horses, mutes and mourning coaches, and empty honorary carriages; and within the house daughters divided between filial regrets and millinery vexations, and sons returning to the world through the vexed channel of their father's will; and one little crippled child, creeping into her dead father's empty room alone, to kneel down and weep beside the bed she had so faithfully watched.

The other, attended by only one mourning coach, with three mourners in it, but met at the grave among the fields in the far-off country, by poor, weeping people, with scraps of incongruous black studiously added to their poor, patched, colorless clothes, who had started early in the morning to pay their last poor tribute of love and honor to the friend of many years.

A few weeks more passed away, and one cold, bitter day in a late spring, Dan, who had been watching at the doorsteps of Maurice Bertram's parsonage in the responsible capacity of parson's man, announced to Fan, who had been watching at the pantry window in the equally high responsible capacity of housemaid, that Mrs. O'Brien's carriage was in sight, and Fan announced the same fact to Winnie and Harry fluttering around the tea-table in the library, and in a few minutes Maurice led his bride over the threshold of their home to Winnie's sisterly embrace, not, indeed, according to Rosalie's threat, in white glacé and Brussels point, but in deep mourning, and with smiles of

welcome mingled with many irrepressible though not bitter tears.

Then, after Winifred and Mrs. O'Brien had left, and the household had been consecrated by the first family prayer, and Maurice and Grace were alone in the library, he opened the shutters, and they stood together looking out through the falling snow over the white streets, to the white roofs and window-sills of the opposite houses.

"My dove has come to me once more," he said, "through the snow!"

And Grace, with her heart full of sacred memories as well as hopes, replied:

"And God will never let us forget that we are still on the battlefield."

Chapter XII.

THE light breeze of a summer morning was occasionally stirring the Venetian blinds in the half-darkened sick-room where Mrs. Dee, during the last ten weeks had been learning the existence and meaning of "nerves," since the disastrous morning when in hastily crossing the pavement from her carriage to her house, her foot had slipped on a piece of orange-peel, and she had sustained one of those inexplicable "jars" which prove the terrible delicacy with which our "harp of thousand strings" is tuned.

"A most mysterious dispensation," said Mrs. Dee's large circle of admiring friends and co-committee ladies; "such an invaluable life, spent in such incessant and self-denying usefulness! If it had been a railway accident, or the explosion of a powder-magazine, one would not, perhaps, have wondered so much—but a scrap of orange-peel! Such a mission to be arrested by such a trifle! And actually in the very prosecution of her benevo-

lent work; for she was returning from a school committee."

Mrs. Dee's acquaintance felt very much perplexed with "Providence" indeed, although of course they were too polite to express themselves strongly on the subject.

And "most mysterious" Mrs. Dee herself thought it. Of course she had not looked for her reward in this life. Who would, for labors such as hers? But a *little* consideration for the importance of such labors as hers might perhaps have been expected. It was not, even (which would not have been so surprising), as if she had been set on a pedestal of unprecedented suffering, as before on a pedestal of unprecedented usefulness; as if, after a life marvelously displaying all the active virtues of an exalted Christian character, she had been called to a fiery trial displaying as marvelously all its passive graces. Such a termination might have been comprehensible. What is a martyrdom, but the natural close of an apostolate? And the biographer of this excellent and lamented lady, this "saint who had combined in one unparalleled life the graces of a Martha and a Mary, the gifts of a Deborah with the ministries of a Phœbe, the ministries of a Phœbe with the patience of a Stephen, and who, finally, had only escaped the translation of an Enoch or an Elijah by the anachronism of being born in the nineteenth century—if indeed such a death could be called less than a translation—" might have added another to the list of those sinless mortals whose histories perplex tender consciences like Mrs. O'Brien, and

(according to Lady Katharine), render entirely superfluous any Papal sanction to the doctrine of an Immaculate Conception.

The triviality of the orange-peel, even, need not have marred this climax. It might, in ingenious hands, have been rendered more effective than the more vulgar and sensational incident of the powder explosion. The explosion might immortalize any insignificant mortal it exploded. But Mrs. Dee would have immortalized the orange-peel.

No such glorification, however, was in store for Mrs. Dee or the orange-peel. If her sufferings had only been on a scale with her labors she felt sure she could have borne them. If the medical men had said among Mrs. Dee's friends, "the sufferings of that exemplary woman are unparalleled. In all the course of our medical experience we have not encountered such a complication of injuries. Any one of them would have surpassed ordinary powers of endurance"— Mrs. Dee felt sure she could have borne it. But there she lay, feeling every noise and movement jar through her as if she had been the violin of a maestro in the hands of a mischievous schoolboy; while doctor after doctor assured her there was nothing to be in the least alarmed about, that her sensations were undoubtedly unpleasant, but that hundreds of their patients underwent the same; and meanwhile nurses and servants murmured openly concerning "whims and fancies."

During those ten weeks she had worn out ten successive nurses, until during the last week Mrs.

Anderson had been persuaded to attempt the task. And already, the calm strength of Mrs. Anderson's character, and her watchful sympathy, testified not so much by words as by little opportune kindnesses, had begun to exercise a soothing control over the sufferer.

On this particular morning, for the sixth time that night, Mrs. Anderson was summoned from her broken sleep on the sofa to Mrs. Dee's bedside.

"I am very sorry, Mrs. Anderson," said the poor querulous voice, "but I cannot bear it any longer. I have been trying for an hour not to mind it, but the flapping of those blinds will drive me distracted. Could you fasten them a little more firmly?"

Mrs. Anderson's dexterous, strong fingers soon effected this purpose; and an expression of relief came over the patient's face.

"Would it be very exacting," she said, "to ask you to read to me a little?"

And Mrs. Anderson read the fortieth Psalm,

"I waited patiently for the Lord."

When she ceased, Mrs. Dee was lying still, shedding quiet tears.

"I cannot wait patiently for anything, Mrs. Anderson," she said at length; "I could have borne a broken limb or any terrible operation. I feel sure I could. But the trying thing in this is that there seems so little to bear. I have lost the power to endure anything. It is very mysterious."

"I think the Lord's dealings mostly are mysteri-

ous, ma'am," said Mrs. Anderson; "at least there are a good many of them I can't see to the end of yet. And I never could see the meaning of any of them until I got on the other side of them."

"You have had your troubles, no doubt," said Mrs. Dee; a little disposed to resent her nurse's trials being put on the same level with her own.

"A few, ma'am. And many's the time I've fretted myself sick to try to read the meaning of the Almighty's dispensations, while they were being burned in on my heart. But I never could. So at last I let it alone. For I consider it's my part not to read the writing to see if it is right, but just to bear the pain. It's the Lord Himself who has got to engrave His commandments on the heart. And He'll be sure to do it right. And when it's done, I'll be sure to read it. And since then I've found things easier."

"Ah!" said Mrs. Dee; "if you had told me that three months since, I should have made a note of it, and repeated it to my Bible class. But now I have to do it, and I can't. And it's so dishonoring to God," she continued; "it's enough to make people think religion is all a delusion. Only think of the doctors, and servants, and every one saying, 'there's Mrs. Dee who could talk so well, and now she hasn't patience to hear a blind flap!' It's very mysterious that exactly the kind of suffering should be laid on me that I cannot glorify my profession by bearing patiently."

Mrs. Anderson was silent.

"Don't you think it *is* very mysterious?" repeated Mrs. Dee.

"Well, ma'am," said Mrs. Anderson, meditatively, "I've generally found that my troubles did come just in the way I didn't like."

"That is not at all what I mean," said Mrs. Dee, a little offended; "what we like or dislike is of little moment. Of course, if we *are* to be tried we must be tried in a way that is a trial. I have said so hundreds of times. But I did expect tribulation would have been sent me in a form which would have enabled me to do credit to the cause of religion."

"Tell me honestly what you think," she resumed, after a pause.

"I'm but a plain-spoken body, ma'am, and words are not like fingers; you can never say precisely where they'll touch, and I might be hurting you without meaning it."

"Say what you think," said Mrs. Dee, "I hate to be treated ceremoniously."

"Well, ma'am, I can only speak what I have felt. It seems to me the Lord can take very good care of the credit of His own cause, and if the foolish bodies say 'what's the profit of being religious, when Mrs. Dee who spoke so well and did so much, has not patience to bear a few restless nights?' there are others who will be remembering about Stephen the martyr, and a good many since his day who have suffered a thousand times as much without a murmur; and they will consider, maybe, that if we are not always patient it's not the fault

of the Almighty, nor of religion, but of ourselves, poor feeble creatures that we are."

Mrs. Dee was silent. The words seemed to flash a new light into her heart, and to reveal many dusty corners there. And at first she was disposed to be more angry with the light, or with the hand that bore it, than with the dusty corners of her heart.

"This comes of putting it into the power of people of that kind to say impertinent things," she said to herself. She lay still a minute, and then said, distantly and coldly:

"I have no further occasion to disturb you, Mrs. Anderson, at present. It is not yet five o'clock. You had better lie down and rest, whether I can or not."

And poor Mrs. Anderson, fearing she had blundered out something harsh and inopportune, pondered for a long time how she could pacify the patient and justify herself. But being of that peculiar species of human beings who grow dumb when self-justification is needed, she could think of nothing conciliatory to say, and after a brief prayer for forgiveness, and for more wisdom in the future, she fell asleep.

Just as Mrs. Anderson fell asleep the sun rose to a point, from which, through a chink in the blind his rays lighted up a glass lustre on the chimney-piece into an instrument of torture for poor Mrs. Dee, while at the same time a neighboring cat began to make demonstrations under the window. For ten minutes, which seemed an hour, Mrs. Dee

bore this double fire, until she could endure no longer, and then once more she aroused Mrs. Anderson, saying:

"If that cat cannot be silenced, and the sun kept out, the medical men may say what they like, but my brain will not stand it."

A cascade from the water-ewer "dispersed" the cat, and a shifting of the blind blotted out the dazzling prism from the lustre.

"I do wonder, Mrs. Anderson, I must confess, that you could sleep through that horrible noise," said Mrs. Dee, reproachfully; "it is rather a disadvantage to a nurse to be a heavy sleeper."

Mrs. Anderson did not retort that the lightest sleep might be made heavy by being continually broken. Her heart was too full of pity and self-reproach. And before long Mrs. Dee made the retort on herself, exclaiming with a burst of tears:

"I am a poor, miserable, selfish creature. You were right enough to say that all this peevishness and impatience are not to be put down to religion, but to me. It is better every one should know what a humbug and a hypocrite I have been."

From bestowing on her infirmities the prettiest "platform" titles, she fell into the other extreme of befouling them with the ugliest names she could think of.

Mrs. Anderson not being in the habit of keeping an emotional diary was not aware that this was a form of private penance. She accordingly thought it was merely a little hysterical burst of temper,

and instead of spiritual consolation she administered smelling-salts.

"You had better tell every one what a hypocrite I am," pursued Mrs. Dee, bitterly; "and then, at all events, there will be no dishonor done to religion. A poor, wretched, noisy, empty, tinkling-cymbal!"

"Ah!" said Mrs. Anderson, very tenderly, thinking she saw some light on the case. "My poor, dear lady! The adversary tried *that* device with me too. And I believed him for many a long day. But it's a lie. It's a cruel lie!"

"*I* am a lie. My life has been a lie," said Mrs. Dee, gradually approaching a true, unexaggerated confession. "At least much of it has. I have spoken that I did *not* know. I have testified that I had *not* seen. I have preached what I shall never be able to practice."

"Never fear, ma'am. The good Lord'll be better than all your fears and all the adversary's threats. He'll strengthen you to be still and suffer, and then He'll strengthen you to get up and speak, as you never spoke before; not from the heights looking down on the world's sorrows and sins, but *from the depths*, where the Lord meets us, and where so many of the grandest psalms were sung. Isn't one word tried in the fire worth a thousand? We're all idol-makers at the best, and idol-worshipers. When the Lord breaks our idol we make a dozen out of the bits. And when He breaks our very hearts, we'll take the rod He breaks them with; we'll take the poor shattered heart itself to

make a pillar to lift ourselves upon, and say: 'see, was ever grief like mine?' But the Lord loves us too well to let us alone in our work. So he just shatters us with some poor, little easy, ordinary trouble that crumbles the very bits to dust, and shows us nothing but how weak we are. And then when we lie all bare and crushed, and nothing, He comes and stands beside us in the dark, and says: 'Why weepest thou?' And at first we know Him not. But then He calls us by name, tenderly, by the poor name we have learned to think so mean, as if it was still dear to Him. And we look round and see Him there Himself, and can say or sob nothing but 'Master! Master!' He is Master of us altogether. And the idols are broken, and our hearts are broken, and we have nothing, and we are nothing. But we are rich as the angels, for we have the Lord Himself."

Mrs. Dee said nothing in reply. A long silence ensued, in which Mrs. Anderson sat appalled at the length of her own speech, and fearing she had wearied out her patient, while Mrs. Dee lay still, for the first time for years applying a sermon, not to her district or classes, or to this or that "inconsistent" person among her acquaintances, but to herself. She was learning "the Divine art of learning." To her amazement, after teaching for years the highest classes, with the highest approval, she found herself learning on what seemed to her the lowest form in the school.

Yet she was far from feeling altogether cast down. A depth of meaning began to dawn on her

in these elementary lessons which she had not hitherto found in the most advanced. Glimpses of grandeur and beauty began to dawn on her in many a self-distrustful sufferer, and in many a despised publican.

She began to feel, that if ever she were permitted to go forth into the world again, it might look higher and wider to her than ever it had before, by so much as she felt herself lower and less. She began to understand that there are a great many things, human as well as Divine, that can only be understood by looking up to them.

But such lessons take a long while learning. For which reason Mrs. Dee's silences became long and frequent. And it was chiefly by an increasing gentleness of manner, and by the quiet interest with which she listened to the histories of other sufferers, that Mrs. Anderson gradually felt that Mrs. Dee had fallen out of the ranks of the Rabbis, into the company of the "little children."

It cannot be, Mr. Bertram. I am sure it would not be right," said Grace Leigh. "You do not know my father as I do. You cannot. I know it would be like breaking up his life. Indeed it must not be."

She was sitting on a low chair by her mother's little work-table, with her work beside her, and her hands clasped on her knees.

"I know you must have really decided before

you gave me your answer," Maurice said; "yet let me say one word more. Could not our home become as homelike to Mr. Leigh as this? And could you not trust me to share your care for him?"

"You do not know him as I do," she persisted. "You did not see the look of peace which came over his face each time we returned from Combe. The first time he looked brighter than I ever saw him since my mother died, and he said with such a smile: 'Oh, Gracie, there is no place like home!' And this time, though he did not look quite so bright because he is not yet, you know, quite well, he seemed to feel it such a rest to be here again. He looked with such a quiet satisfaction round the room, and inspected all the old familiar things. And he said: 'Promise me, Gracie, you will never try to take me away again, at least not for my good.' I said, we must attend to what the doctors said. But he said: 'They may say what they like, I shall never be as well or as happy anywhere on earth as here. Promise me not to make any loving little plots to get me away. It is of no use, and it makes me feel like a drifting weed.' And I promised him to plan nothing except he knew all about it, all through, and really wished it himself. And could I ask him to leave for my sake? He would not make a difficulty if he thought I had the least want or wish for anything. For me to ask him for what might break his heart to grant would be just to take it from him. He would never let me see one reproachful look. But I should see him droop, and suffer, and how could I bear that?"

A gleam of hope came over Maurice's face at the half-implied admission that her father's happiness was the only consideration that made an obstacle, and he said:

"You may be right. You must be right, if you feel always as you do now. But give me the faintest hope that one day you might think otherwise; that if you could see any way in which Mr. Leigh's happiness could be consulted without destroying mine, you would think over your decision again. If you could give me the faintest hope of your being what you could be, and you only in the world to me, and I would come and go as if I had never spoken these words to you."

She hesitated and looked down for a minute. Then looking up at him with the clear truthful eyes no one could ever doubt, she said:

"I *cannot*, Mr. Bertram. How could I? How could I feel honest with my father, if I had a concealment from him in the innermost corner of my heart? I could not live a day like that. I should feel as if I were deceiving him, and although I might be doing it for his happiness, I could never bear it. His trust and his tender thoughtfulness for me would sting me to the heart if I felt I was secretly leaning on any one in the world but on him, or looking for my happiness in any time, however far off, to any but to him. Besides," she added, "I could never let you sacrifice your life to such a dream."

He said quietly that her permission or prohibition would make no difference in this but only in

his hope; that having found the very best, the reality of all his visions, it was simply impossible for his heart ever to turn from it more. And then he took leave, and slowly went out of the house, and with a heart not a little cast down, re-entered his parsonage and locked himself into his study.

"A just Nemesis," he said bitterly to himself, "for my ever mistaking the false for the true. And yet," he continued, rising from these self-reproaches to a truer feeling, "if ever love was true on earth, mine is for Grace. And nothing can or shall prevent my caring all my life for her and her happiness, more than for anything on earth, and watching to turn aside every possible trial and distress from her, although I must do it unknown, and unregarded, and unrewarded by word or look."

Yet just then a bewildering sunbeam of hope broke in on his thoughts. "She said she could not ask her father! But if she were altogether indifferent, could she not tell him all quite naturally and easily!"

This avenue of thought led far, but suddenly he turned resolutely from it, for it seemed to him almost a treachery to creep by any bypath to the glimpse of a hope she had refused to allow. "No," he thought, "she is true to her innermost heart, and I will be true to her commands in mine. I will not in my secret thoughts admit a hope she does not sanction."

But when the sun is risen it is hard, by the most resolute foldings of drapery, to make the day quite like night. The faintest pencil of a sunbeam is so

much stronger than all the bolts and bars of darkness.

("Exaggerated! *über spannt!*" Lady Katharine would have said, had she known of this. "Exactly what I always felt to be Grace's weak point! Conscience getting the better of common sense. In Lady Jane Grey's position, for instance, Grace, and nine-tenths of the good women in the world, would have made Lady Jane's mistake; that is, gone and done precisely the wrong thing precisely because she didn't like it. But as to Maurice, I have no patience with him. Men ought to know better, even good men (who always, by the way, do more wrong-headed things than any one else). Be true to Grace's commands in his innermost heart! arrant Quixotic nonsense. He should have gone direct to Mr. Leigh at once, and everything and every one would have been set right in half an hour."

However, Lady Katharine knew nothing of the matter until long afterwards, which may partly account for the good sense of her remarks. Critics of all kinds of battlefields have such a great advantage over combatants as to clearness of vision; especially when the smoke and the din have vanished, and the battle is lost or won.)

Meantime Grace sat some minutes, quite still, where Maurice left her.

"If it had been possible!" she thought, but did not even in thought follow the possibility to a conclusion, "for it is *not* possible," was her conviction. "And I *am* true to my father in my innermost

heart," she said to herself. "I do choose with my whole heart to live for him, and only for him. I *can* meet his smile with a smile from my whole heart. I am sure I can. I *will*. I *can* feel it the happiest thing in the world to work for him and Harry, and to make his home home-like and bright. I always did, and I shall still. I *will*. I need not tell father anything about it, I am sure, because—because there is nothing to tell. My whole heart belongs to him and to Harry as much as ever it did. My happiness is in the old home as much as ever it was. Of course, I cannot help being sorry for Mr. Bertram. But he is so good and true, all must be right for him. But it will be wonderfully happy for the woman whose duty it is to love him as he ought to be loved!"

And persuaded as Grace felt that her father and Harry and their home, were as much her all and her happiness as ever, some shadows would drop heavily over the sunny pictures she tried to make. The struggle ended in a retreat to her room and an overwhelming flood of tears, which she tried hard to check, but failed: partly because the hidden source from which they sprang was the one point she dared not approach, and partly because she attempted too much, not merely to assuage the waters, but to bring back the sunshine. At length she effected a compromise and tacit truce with herself, concluding: "It is not necessary to be happy about everything. It is only necessary to do right and to be sure God is doing right with us. He will take care of the happiness."

The autumn and winter of that year passed away with little incident either at Combe Monachorum or at the Cedars, or in Grace Leigh's world in the east of London.

Miss Betsy Lovel's cataract was slowly advancing towards the complete blindness which was to be the signal of deliverance. Miss Lavinia's strength was steadily increasing, and from time to time she sent memorials of her walks to Grace in the form of dried flowers, or sea-weeds from green, cool banks and tide-washed pools, well known to both. To Miss Betsy's chagrin, Miss Lavinia could not be induced to prosecute her landscape painting. It was so difficult to her to adapt her conventional grays and browns, and her various symbolical "touches" for trees and herbage, to the very unconventional and irregular trees and ferns and grasses; the fresh and tender greens and blues of the hills, and the translucent emeralds and amethysts of the sea around Combe, that after a few disappointing efforts, she gave up the struggle, and sagaciously determined for the future to look and enjoy out-of-doors, and to paint in-doors. By this means many perplexing contrasts of form and color were evaded, and her respect for the instructor of her youth was made compatible with her delight in a nature dissenting schismatically from his principles of art. His sketches, she concluded, must have been made in some peculiarly-tinted foreign country, where the meadows had too much respect for the sun, or the color-box, to persist in unattainable greens, and where the trees were highly respect-

able, and clothed themselves in decent browns, and ranged themselves in appropriate attitudes for foregrounds.

Either this, or there must be an "artistic" way of seeing the world, and an ordinary human way. Miss Lavinia, therefore, not being able to attain to the high artistic point of view, contented herself with coloring like her drawing-master, and seeing like other people.

She took endless delight on the other hand in reviving certain faint beginnings of Linnæan botany, and in two books about ferns and sea-weeds, which Lady Katharine lent her. And great as Miss Betsy considered the fall from landscape art to such childish amusements, she was consoled by witnessing the health and pleasure her sister was gaining every day in searching among the treasure-houses of these "riches" of God. More than one old woman and sick child, moreover, Miss Lavinia found to read the Bible to, while Miss Betsy took comfort in reviving traditional receipts for possets and cough mixtures, which greatly increased the respect entertained towards her in the village, and by the housekeeper at the Abbey. Nevertheless, the hearts of the sisters remained true to the old home in the east of London, and by far the larger portions of Miss Lavinia's letters (to say nothing of the reiterated P. SS.) were occupied with inquiries about the maids-of-all-work, past and present, at the lodgings, Mr. Leigh's health and sermons, Caleb Treherne, Mrs. Anderson, and other matters connected with the district.

Mrs. Anderson herself, meanwhile, had begun quietly working under Mrs. O'Brien's superintendence, among the poor she had been so long acquainted with in her own neighborhood; finding out, as it would scarcely have been possible for Mrs. O'Brien to have done, the true cases of distress from the false, and the people to whom alms might be a priceless bridge over a temporary difficulty from those to whom they would have been merely a further step in the descent to helpless and hopeless pauperism.

Gradually, moreover, as with all good works that have root in themselves and life from above, one benevolent plan grew out of another. For instance, a home for destitute orphan children, not so large as to cease to be *home*, nor for individual character and affection to be lost in the necessary routine of a great institution; and a cottage where the sick enjoyed fresh air and nourishing food and the luxury of being cared for during those weeks of convalescence which so often decide whether the patient returns to life with renewed strength and spirit, or sinks into permanent feebleness and depression. And as in all things of natural growth, these works of love all fitted into and filled out each other; the orphan children waiting on the sick women, and thus being themselves trained for their work in life, while more evils were avoided which spring from any one class or age being unnaturally secluded to itself.

Many also were the ways in which Winnie could share in Mrs. O'Brien's work, so that she began to

lose her fear that the door of the Expanding Palace which could only be kept open by going out to serve and welcoming others within, would ever again be closed.

Lady Katharine, on one of her flying visits, saw and rejoiced.

"Ah," she said, "if we would only each of us take care of the little bit of waste ground around us, there would be no need (as unhappily there now is!) of almshouses, where isolated old women worry each other into the grave, or for gigantic asylums where little children are squared and squeezed into uniform little blocks of humanity, only to be distinguished by size!"

"In that case," Maurice replied, "perhaps there need have been only one institution and one asylum in the world, the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. And that would be a Family and a Home. But we are some little way off from that yet."

"But Grace Leigh," said Winnie one day to Maurice, "is best off of us all. It seems as if, for her, the gates opened into all the Five Worlds at once. For everything she learns and sees and imagines is consecrated to the service of other people. Religion and art and serving others, seem all one for Grace. She is doing the very highest thing any one can do just in doing little loving home-duties. Don't you think, Maurice, there is no one's life so good and happy as Grace's?"

Happily for Maurice, when Winnie was pursuing a track of her own, she was often too eager about it to watch how it affected other people. There-

fore she did not observe his silence, but before he could decide what to reply, she continued:

"If it would only last for ever, Maurice! But auntie says Mr. Leigh looks more and more feeble every time he comes here for his Monday holiday, once a month. And if his voice should break down again, what would Grace do? I began once to speak to her about it, but she did not seem to like to dwell on it. She only said he would rest a little while again, but she hoped he would not need it. But her voice trembled; and when I ventured to ask her what she would do if she herself were ill again, she only laughed and said she was the toughest person in the world, and had never been ill in her life except that once, and she often thought that instead of Campbell's last man, she should be the last woman. But then," continued Winnie, "her face suddenly changed, and she looked at me so earnestly and said: 'Indeed, I don't think father is worse; Harry and I both think he is stronger than he usually is in the autumn. And I think no one can judge as well as Harry and I.' But she did not ask me what auntie or any one else thought. And I did not dare to say anything more. Do you think she could have been afraid to ask, Maurice? or do you think I ought to have told her?"

"I think not. No, certainly not," said Maurice; "only if Aunt Cecil likes to ask them, it might do Mr. Leigh good to spend a week or two here at Christmas. I shall have to be in the country just then," he added, rather carelessly. Winnie thought and wondered.

Grace had indeed quite given up asking people how they thought Mr. Leigh looking. She could so often see what they would have answered by the expression of their faces; and people who only saw him occasionally (she persuaded herself) forgot how he looked when they saw him last, and naturally thought him worse than he really was. For he did always now look rather white and feeble, Grace admitted to herself. But only she and Harry could perceive the little improvements in appetite and spirits, or in power of walking or studying, from day to day. Besides, had he not been able to read the Church service morning and evening, and to preach in the afternoon every Sunday, without intermission, since their return from Combe?

So the months passed quietly on, until the close of the year came, and the day for the annual visit to Cousin Felix.

Mr. Leigh had, more than once, during the year, contrived to call, and had found opportunities for a few minutes' quiet talk with little Maud, so that he and the child had a complete mutual understanding, and the smile of welcome which lit up her whole countenance when she saw him, quite warmed the chill atmosphere of the house for Mr. Leigh.

On this occasion the Hunter family were more unapproachable in their various forms of state than ever. Mr. Hunter had bought a mansion and estate in one of the western counties near Combe Monachorum, and had that autumn astonished the natives by a magnificence which threw the Abbey and the Wyses quite into the shade.

The boys incensed Harry by informing him that the young Wyses were "muffs," and that Lady Katharine was a "screw," as (in another sense) was every horse in her stables. Indeed, no man who had the least idea what a horse should be, would, they asserted, be seen behind that disreputable old pair of grays, which Lady Katharine drove. But, of course, they conceded, women could not be expected to understand such things. Beyond Lady Katharine's stables, the Hunter family did not as yet appear to have penetrated.

"The truth was (Alicia told Grace) that those decaying old country families are dying with envy at the superior elegance of papa's establishment, and endeavor, mamma says, to hide their mortification under an affectation of indifference or contempt."

From which it might perhaps be gathered that the reception of the Felix Hunters in the West Country had not corresponded to what Cousin Felix called their due and becoming sense of their own position and character.

From Mr. and Mrs. Hunter not a word dropped to lead to any conclusion of the kind.

Mr. Hunter expatiated to Mr. Leigh on the excellences of his estate, and on the immense advantage it would be to that old-fashioned country neighborhood to have a man introduced into it who understood what the nineteenth century was, who would initiate it into the mysteries of steam ploughing and threshing, drain the low lands, enclose and subsoil the wastes, and, in short, give the

inhabitants generally an idea of what could be done with land by a man of progress who looked on it, not as a mere ancestral position, but as an investment.

Mrs. Hunter observed to Grace, in her loftiest manner, that Deerham Park would be a very pleasant retreat for people who like themselves would of course spend the season in London, or some portion of each year on the Continent. It had been the residence of Lord Newmarket, she remarked, in passing, and Lord Newmarket's housekeeper, who would remain with them, had observed that the Wyses were respected in the neighborhood as very good kind of people, although, naturally, not living in the style they were accustomed to at Deerham Park.

Mrs. Hunter also regretted that this would be the last year they should see Grace and her father at Bedford Square. It had, however, long been a trial to her to be imprisoned in a part of the town where none of her "set" felt at home. And Mr. Hunter had just concluded a negotiation for the purchase of a house in Belgravia, to which, she was afraid, it would hardly be a kindness to ask poor dear Mr. Leigh to come, so delicate as he seemed to be, on account of the distance.

Grace might have consoled Mrs. Hunter by assuring her that Belgravia was not as far from the East of London as the Cedars, but that the distance in that case was made no obstacle by means of Mrs. O'Brien's carriage. But retort was not at all in Grace's way. Indeed, almost the only part of Mrs.

Hunter's discourse which made any impression on her was the fact that one person more evidently thought her father looking out of health. An impression deepened to an overwhelming conviction when little Maud said, as they were going away, with great tears in her eyes:

"Oh, Cousin Grace, I have been knitting a little comforter for dear Mr. Leigh's throat. Do you think he might wear it on Sunday evenings when he comes out of church? The churches get so hot, and Mr. Leigh looks——"

But there either little Maud's tears, or a glimpse she caught of Grace's face stopped her, and it was not till after some moments' silence that she resumed:

"You won't think it strange or interfering of me, Cousin Grace? I know you do everything any one could possibly do, or think of, for Mr. Leigh. But I thought perhaps you might not have thought of the comforter. And if you have, I should be very much obliged if Mr. Leigh would wear mine sometimes. Mr. Leigh has been so very good to me," said the poor child, "and I do love him so very dearly."

When, after the long silent kiss with which the cousins parted, Grace looked back again at Maud, it sent a terrible pang to her heart to see the wistful look with which she followed Mr. Leigh. And she felt drawn back by it as if by a spell to give one more kiss to the little suffering creature who loved her father so well.

"Cousin Grace," little Maud then whispered

timidly, "the house in Belgravia is not so very far from the river, they say, and there are steamboats on the river, are there not? Do you think Mr. Leigh could ever come and pay me one of his little visits? They do help me more than anything in the world. But not, if it would tire Mr. Leigh, Cousin Grace, you know, not for the world!"

With one more kiss and a conditional promise Grace went away, and this time she did not venture to look back again.

The three walked silently away from Bedford Square that night.

"Your Cousin Felix is a remarkable man, Grace," said Mr. Leigh at length, "really a very remarkable man. Such indomitable energy and perseverance! Naturally, such a man must succeed. What a useful life his has been! He reminded me to-night, as we were going over the past, that he had founded or begun to found an Hospital and an Orphan Asylum. And he talks of restoring the church in the parish where his new place is, and of quite remodeling the board of guardians. No one can say the amount of good he may do in that parish, with his energy, and his means. A useful life! indeed a very remarkable life!" concluded Mr. Leigh, recognizing by a sigh the contrast which Mr. Hunter had been implying throughout those impressive fragments of his autobiography which he had been recapitulating to his meek and patient guest.

Grace attempted no debate with her father. But Harry, panting for an outlet to his long pent-up indignation, exclaimed:

"I think Cousin Felix is a Pharisee, and Cousin Hunters are every one of them snobs, and Mrs. Hunter," concluded Harry—hunting through his not very extensive resources of imagery for a simile, expressive enough—"Mrs. Hunter is the frog in Æsop's fables."

"Harry, Harry!" said Mr. Leigh. "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged."

"I do not judge, father," said Harry, writhing from beneath what he felt to be an amiable misapplication of the text. "I only feel! And I can't help it! They actually pretend to look down on Lady Katharine, and Grace—and you," said he, advancing to what, in his loyal eyes was a climax of enormities. "And I can't stand it, and I won't. It's a disgrace to have them for cousins. And I wish I need never speak to one of them again, except little Maud, of course; poor good dear little Maud," he added in a softened tone.

"Poor dear little Maud," said Grace, seizing the first favorable turning. "She loves you so dearly, father! She says no one in the world ever helped her as you have."

"And that alone is better than founding ten thousand of Cousin Felix's Hospitals and Orphan Asylums. I have no doubt," pursued Harry, "they give cheap broth and scraps to those wretched orphans; and that in that Hospital the nurses drink brandy, and starve the patients, as I saw they do, the other day, in the paper. When I am a doctor, won't I get appointed to that Hospital of Cousin Felix's, and see all about it and write to

the *Times*, and have the poor creatures set right!" concluded Harry, waxing eloquent in his imaginary defense of the imaginary wrongs of his patients that were to be.

Mr. Leigh was appalled at Harry's vehemence but he simply said:

"You will find a good many other things to set right first, Harry, on your way."

The next day brought two letters from Combe. One was in the conventional handwriting of Miss Lavinia's school-days, the letters neatly constructed to be as nearly like each other as was consistent with any possibility of being read, as if it had been their first vocation in life to look elegant, and quite a secondary one to be understood; a graceful obscurity which was further deepened by every page being crossed, Miss Lavinia never having been able experimentally to realize the fact of the penny postage.

The letter, however, gave great delight to Grace.

"They are coming back, father," she said. "They are coming back. They want us to take lodgings for them at once. Miss Betsy's eyes are ready for the operation. They seem so glad to come, and won't it be delightful to have them here again?"

"Lady Katharine wants us to return," the letter concluded, "and it does, I am afraid, seem very ungrateful not to wish to come back to such a pretty home as she has provided for us. But we are two foolish old people, and I do want to see Caleb

Treherne about some of those neglected girls; and Betsy says she is very sorry to grieve Lady Katharine, but if she recovers her sight she does not think she could bear to live in a place where she has nothing to do, and nobody to manage. And we do both want so very much to hear Mr. Leigh preach again. I never shall find anything help me like those afternoon sermons of his. Nor will Betsy."

Grace's voice trembled perceptibly as she read those words, for her father could scarcely speak above a whisper that morning, and she was in terror as to what could be done for the next Sunday.

The other letter was from Lady Katharine, in a large bold hand, which seemed to have no other purpose but to be written quickly and read easily, the first purpose occasionally prevailing over the second. It began:

"My Dear Grace—I don't make at all a good old fairy. My perverse *protégés* persist in mistaking me for the wicked old fairy, regarding my fairy palaces as dreadful fairy-prisons, where, having bewitched my victims into strange unwonted shapes, I shut them up in cages, and expect them to sing gratefully for my amusement, as if they enjoyed it. Two of these victims are at this moment escaping from these malicious spells. They insist on abandoning their cage, and resuming their former mode of life, in spite of all my persuasions, and all the sugar and gilding I have lavished on the

cage. But what hurts my feelings most of all is that I suspect you and Mr. Leigh of being my counter magicians.

"Seriously, dear Grace, it is very hard that the friends of a solitary old woman like me will prefer being troubled in their own way to being happy in mine. But I give up the contest. Willfulness was the first sin, and will be the last, our new curate says; and even in myself, I confess I can detect just those few faint traces of its presence which are necessary to give one a sympathy with fallen humanity—so that, for instance, it might at this moment be dangerous to the Miss Lovels and to you, were I a despotic monarch, or the majority in a Republic.

"But now, Grace, be reasonable, and make the Miss Lovels understand that it is in some way essential to my happiness that you should take for them the most comfortable lodgings you can find, near you. Say I have the distribution of a fund instituted in the days of Arthur Pendragon for the especial benefit of the daughters of naval and marine officers. Say I expect Miss Betsy to repay me the debt to the last farthing, with compound interest, in the millennium; and as our new curate says the millennium is to begin either in October 1867, or in January 1876, really the investment is scarcely a speculation! But whatever you say or do, make that dear fidgetty old gentlewoman comfortable until the operation. I have settled about that, already, with the oculist. Afterwards, a willful woman must have her way. But I also have my

plans. And time only will prove who this willful woman is: Miss Betsy Lovel, or you—you meek little despot—or your affectionate old friend,

"KATHARINE WYSE.

"N.B.—I enclose a letter to be delivered to Miss Lovel in case of the operation proving successful, and her thereupon proposing to resume her school."

Grace simply engaged the required lodgings and took Miss Betsy and Miss Lavinia thither, on their arrival in London, telling them that Lady Katharine insisted on their still being her guests.

Miss Betsy patiently submitted and Miss Lavinia thankfully acquiesced, and thus matters rested until the operation.

The couching of the cataract was perfectly successful, and after the few prescribed weeks of subsequent inaction, as soon as Miss Betsy was permitted to use her eyes again, Grace found her one morning busy writing circulars to inform the parents of her former pupils of her intention to reopen the academy for young ladies. "I should prefer calling it a girls' school," she said, "but I suppose we must yield to vulgar prejudices."

Miss Betsy was evidently trying hard to take a cheerful view of things, yet it was equally evident that desponding thoughts would intrude themselves as she prepared to recommence the old lifelong struggle with advancing years, and a terribly progressive age.

"I do wish sometimes," she said, "I had been

gifted with a taste for teaching, or that there were anything else for poor gentlewomen to do."

Grace concluded that the moment had arrived for producing Lady Katharine's enclosed letter.

Miss Betsy read it through, with quivering lips and a deepening color. But as she laid it down, an expression of hope and joyful determination beamed over her whole countenance.

"Lady Katharine need not have apologised," she said, "or tried to make it easier for me, by saying it is what she would have liked herself. My pride is not of that kind. I will go and see Mrs. Dee about it to-morrow. They want us to undertake the superintendence of a training school for nurses," she added in explanation, "with a small orphanage and servants' training school, in which Lavinia would help as well. It is to be in Mr. Bertram's parish; Mrs. Dee and Mrs. Anderson have been arranging the details with Lady Katharine. And to prepare me for it, I must myself be trained in one of the Hospitals. It will be new life to Lavinia. And as to her accomplishments being thrown away," concluded Miss Betsy, with a final little fling at the century, "why, they *are* thrown away on such an age and in such a neighborhood as this. It will be quite a comfort to withdraw them from a world so little capable of appreciation. Only think, instead of teaching girls who ought to be at the National Schools, things they don't appreciate, and have no right to learn—of spending one's life in helping to make sick people comfortable, seeing that the nurses obey the doctors, and training ser-

vants to do their work, as not one in a hundred knows how to do it, in these days! And only think of Lavinia actually having her poor maids-of-all-work under her own roof to comfort, and teach, and help, with me beside her to see she doesn't spoil them."

And Miss Betsy's eyes kindled with hope, not the less because her military soul foresaw enough of wholesome discipline and conflict in the future to keep her true British blood healthily stirring.

Meanwhile, Mr. Leigh's health slowly declined from stage to stage; yet he himself was the only one of the little family party who indulged in no delusions as to his state. So much of his life, from character as well as from circumstances, had been passive; so much of his inward conflicts had arisen from indecision how far it was his duty to suffer, and how far to contend, that now, when he was called, plainly and only, to suffer, half his trials were over. In suffering, his whole nature seemed to rise into action. So entire was his acquiescence that mere endurance became glorified into sacrifice. His will not merely submitted to all the trials laid on him, but actively embraced the will of God, "rejoicing in tribulation." Life, for him, had long had in it so much of "dying daily," that Death appeared to him as the conscious beginning of eternal living. Life had, for him, had in it so much that was passive that death presented itself as a sacred willing act. He had so long endeavored to resign his will to the will of God, that the last act of commending

his spirit into the hands of God seemed to him no strange plunge into a fathomless chasm, but simply the last step of a long but necessary descent, after which the next step would be upward.

Moreover, his relations with Grace underwent a gradual transformation. So long he had, unconsciously, been leaning on her; so long it had been her one aim to fulfill her mother's dying wish that she should take care of him and Harry, that they neither of them marked the moment when all this was changed; when, as they went down together to the edge of that gulf which one only was to cross, the sufferer became the supporter, and the heart that had turned so instinctively to her for comfort and strength, began at length to give instead of receiving.

"Gracie," he said one evening, when Harry was out, "I have not done half for you and Harry I could have wished. But perhaps I have done nearly all I could, and what God willed. I have had one concealment from you darling, which it is time I should tell you of. Out of that sum I took for pocket money, I have always paid an insurance on my life. It is but little, Grace. It is for a thousand pounds. But it will enable you to set Harry going, and perhaps leave a little to be invested to help out your income by-and-by. And for the rest Harry must work. Remember, Grace, it will be Harry's greatest safeguard to work for you. It brings nothing of what you dread really nearer, Gracie," he concluded (seeing her turn away her head), "to speak of it."

"Oh father," she said, trying to control herself, "I know *you* cannot dread it. You cannot help wishing to go. But it is so dreadful to think things *must* go on, when every thing is over for me."

"Not every thing, darling," he said, taking her hand. "Remember, there is Harry. You must bring him to us—to your mother and me. But never forget, Gracie, work will be Harry's safeguard. You must let him feel he has to work for you. I know," he added, tenderly, "what you like best. You would like to be a Providence for all you love, and to work yourself to death to enable them to live in ease. But remember that would be Harry's ruin. Nothing will help him more to grow into a true Christian man, than to feel he has a home to make for you. I spoke to him once about it. And by the look of resolution that came over his face, and by the way he has worked at his lessons since, I know he will do it, and in doing it, will grow what he should be. And now, Gracie," he concluded, "I want to see Mr. Bertram. He has not been here much lately. I suppose he is more and more occupied in his parish. But I want to ask him to be a trustee to manage that little property for you and Harry."

"No, father, please not," said Grace, coloring beyond all control, "could you not ask—ask—ask Cousin Felix," she suggested, in desperation. "Is it not better to have such things in one's own family."

"Gracie," said Mr. Leigh, very gravely and softly, after some moments' silence. "Remember I

am mother and father to you. You would not, I am sure, be so unjust to me as to have any concealments on any grounds from me."

She hesitated an instant, and then, looking down with a face in which all the sudden color of the minute before had faded, she said, "Father! I could not, I could never—have left you. And if I had told you, you would perhaps have thought I wished to go, and not have allowed me to give Mr. Bertram the answer I did."

"But Gracie," said Mr. Leigh smiling a little, as he looked at her downcast eyelids. "It might have been perfectly simple, might it not? If you had only told me you did *not* wish it, I should have believed you, should I not, and all would have been quite simple and plain."

To which, Grace tried to make a reply, but succeeded in making none except through the sudden color which rushed again over her face, and through the faintest dawn of an unconscious smile which dimpled her cheeks.

But that evening Maurice Bertram received a letter from Mr. Leigh, which he came very early the next morning to answer in person. To Maurice's disappointment, Grace was nowhere to be found, and Mr. Leigh, little Fan said, with a multiplication of courtesies, was not up but wished to see Mr. Bertram in his bedroom.

Before the day was closed Maurice stood in a relationship to Grace and Harry which gave him the right to take every possible care of them both. But it was not that of a Trustee.

And the next morning Mrs. O'Brien's carriage was waiting a long time outside Mrs. Treherne's shop, to the great glorification of Mrs. Treherne.

Mrs. O'Brien meekly and timidly assured Grace that although she could not be a mother to her, "of course no one but a mother could," she did love her with a love as nearly like a mother's, she believed, as anything else in the world could be.

And Winnie, when she and Grace stood once more together alone in Grace's little bedroom, before the little dressing-table with the red morocco Bible on it, took Grace's hands and pressed them tight in hers and said:

"Oh Gracie, I am so glad, in the very inmost middle of my heart. And I am so glad I *am* glad, Gracie. For I always thought I never should have been able to love any one who took Maurice away. Because I had so planned everything all my life. But I am glad, Grace, in my inmost heart. And I am so glad I am glad. Because it does show that I love you and Maurice really, doesn't it? And don't you think it may show that I have got out of the Contracting Chamber, at last?"

And she threw her arms round Grace's neck and sobbed.

"But I am crying," she said, "because I am so glad, so glad and thankful to God. Rosalie said, when she heard it, 'Poor little one! Then the beautiful lady has come to Mr. Maurice at last. Thy trials are begun. Thou canst never more be the first. But take courage! one day some one else will love *thee* best!' But I *was* angry at that,

Gracie. I could not help it. Do you think I could? And I said, 'Rosalie, I never want to be first any more. I had rather be second with Maurice than first with any one else in the world.' And I would, Gracie, of course. And then only think of our being sisters—real sisters. I wonder I never thought of it before." Lady Katharine, Etc

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